Tales from the road to **organizational Legitimacy**

Navigating institutional highways for a license to operate

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Introduction

The research in this dissertation examines the long and winding road of organizational legitimacy. It is long because organizations require legitimacy throughout their lifetime; it is winding because obtaining and maintaining legitimacy involves human processes, behaviors, and perceptions that change over time. As such, the road is full of twists and turns, possibilities and obstructions, and maneuvering its course is an inherent part of doing business.

Broadly defined as the collective approval of authority within a society or social group (Tyler, 2006; Zelditch, 2001), legitimacy can be viewed a license to operate. The license to operate is inextricably tied to the access to and use of resources. When an organization's actions and products speak to the values of internal and external stakeholders, its access to resources and chances of survival improve (Suchman, 1995; Parsons, 1956; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). In fact, societal values dictate organizational behavior to the extent that not to operate in line with these values may threaten the organization's existence (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Parsons, 1956). That makes legitimacy necessary and valuable to organizations. For this reason, we continue to study it, to try to understand its development, to determine how organizations obtain it, how and why they lose it, and how they hold on to it. The studies in this dissertation seek to further our understanding of how emerging organizations gain legitimacy, and how the meaning of legitimacy for existing organizations can change over time.

Defining Organizational Legitimacy

Scholars (e.g., Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Ruef & Scott, 1998; Scott, 2014; Suchman, 1995; Zelditch, 2001) attribute the introduction of organizational legitimacy to Max Weber who "was the first great social theorist to stress the importance of legitimacy" (Scott, 2014, p. 71). Weber asserted that conformance with legal and social rules and values could result in legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Parsons (1956) built on Weber's ideas and suggested that organizations are conferred legitimacy when their activities cohere to social norms and values (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Scott, 2014). Deephouse and Suchman (2008) credit Meyer and Rowen (1977) with the elucidation of organizational legitimacy that laid the foundation for the important contributions to the theory in the 1990s by authors such as Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), Aldrich and Fiol (1994), Scott (2014, first edition 1995), and Suchman (1995).

Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as "the generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (p. 574). As Scott (2014)

points out, these 'socially constructed systems' are institutional frameworks. Business firms are "considered legitimate when their organizational practices are perceived to satisfy the social expectations of their environment" (Scherer, Palazzo, & Seidl, 2013, p. 262). Because these expectations change and develop over time (Clark, 1956; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Votaw & Sethi, 1969), legitimacy is not a given once it has been obtained. Rather, it is vital to organizations that audiences continue to perceive them as operating in line with prevailing values. Organizations perceived as legitimate increase their chances of rewards and survival (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy is threatened when an organization's activities run counter to constituent value perceptions and/or expectations. Scherer et al. (2013) provide the examples of Enron, Siemens, and BP. All three companies publicized their socially responsible and sustainable business practices. When fraudulent and irresponsible practices of the companies were exposed, the organizations suffered a loss of legitimacy. This was costly both to their bottom lines and their reputations. A more recent example is Volkswagen. Although it appears that the company will recover, its emissions cheating scandal not only tarnished the company's reputation, but it also cost the company $14.7 billion in one of the largest consumer class-action settlements in U.S. history (Tabuchi & Ewing, 2016).

The need to maintain legitimacy can also limit organizations to the confines of expectations and inhibit innovation (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Legitimacy can thus be both a constraint as well as a resource (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Lieberman, 2002; Suchman, 1995). For example, we have already indicated that organizations that adhere to and convey socially accepted norms and values increase their chances of legitimacy attainment. Change and innovation, however, may challenge prevailing norms. Unless the innovation can be explained and made sense of in terms of existing beliefs of what is good and appropriate, its introduction may be impeded. Isomorphic pressures may also inhibit new organizations from introducing new business models, concepts, or innovations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Isomorphism refers to organizations adopting the language and structures of other, legitimate organizations in order to improve access to resources, political power, and legitimacy (Hannan & Freeman, 1984; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Another example of legitimacy as a constraint concerns behavior. As Ashforth and Gibbs (1990) explain, organizations with low legitimacy are under more constituent scrutiny, limiting managers' response options in times of crisis. Under increased scrutiny, public relations and impression management strategies may exacerbate the legitimacy problem as audiences may question the intent and sincerity of these activities.

In order to understand more precisely what legitimacy is and how it works, the typologies provided by Scott (2014) and Suchman (1995) are useful. Both scholars identify three types of organizational legitimacy. Scott refers to regulative, normative,

and cognitive legitimacy, based on his three pillars of institutions. He describes regulative legitimacy as complying with professional standards and legal regulations, normative legitimacy as doing what is right in terms of social values and norms, and cognitive legitimacy as conforming to templates or scripts of behavior because they are commonly understood to be the way things are done. He explains that "Institutions comprise regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott, 2014, p. 56). The institutions are the framework for stability, and the regulative, normative, and cognitive elements reinforce them. When the three elements support activities and behaviors, institutions are strong. When there is tension among the elements, the foundation weakens and institutional change may result (Scott, 2014).
Suchman's (1995) typology includes pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy. Suchman indicates that pragmatic legitimacy involves constituents bestowing legitimacy due to what is in it for them by doing so. An organization provides a good or service to a constituency and in return receives support from that constituency. Pragmatic legitimacy is often reflected in policies and performance standards. Moral legitimacy is granted by audiences when the organization is judged to be ethically correct based on societal values. It involves an evaluation of an organization's products, procedures, and structures as "the right thing to do" (Suchman, 1995, p. 579) for a segment of society or society-at-large (Bitektine, 2011).

In contrast to pragmatic and moral legitimacy, Suchman (1995) indicates that an organization has obtained comprehensible cognitive legitimacy when its presence and activities make the social world less chaotic, more understandable, and more manageable. Taken-for-granted cognitive legitimacy is obtained when an organization becomes so socially entrenched that its existence is beyond question. Similarly, Scott (2014, p. 74) indicates that cognitive legitimacy "rests on preconscious, taken-for-granted understandings" and that individuals and organizations conform to culturally accepted roles and behaviors in order to obtain it. Conformance often occurs because behaving any other way is inconceivable (Scott, 2014). When an organization becomes taken-for-granted, it becomes less susceptible to scrutiny of its right to exist (Bitektine, 2011; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). It is not surprising, then, that cognitive legitimacy is the most difficult form of legitimacy to obtain (Suchman, 1995). However, Deephouse and Suchman (2008, p. 67) heed researchers "not to become fixated on defending the purity and independence" of legitimacy's dimensions, noting that obtaining one type of legitimacy may result in increasing one or both of the other types as well. Scott (2014) also states that the legitimacies may be in conflict. He provides the example of the Mafia which is considered legitimate by its members and widely recognized by others as a particular manner of organizing, but which lacks both regulative legitimacy with legal institutions and normative legitimacy with the general public. Hence, securing one type of

legitimacy does not guarantee that others will also be obtained. In addition, tensions can arise among the legitimacies when, for instance, existing structures stifle innovation that has been precipitated by changing normative values (e.g., existing agricultural production standards versus new sustainability goals and policies).

The order of legitimacy attainment is also still under discussion in the literature. Normative evaluations require previous cognitive knowledge (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), while recurring normative evaluations that something is good and right can lead to the "entrenchment of a practice," or cognitive legitimacy (Zeitz, Mittal, & McAulay, 1999, p. 751). Zeitz et al. (1999) describe normative and cognitive legitimacy "as inextricably connected empirically" (p. 770). Normative judgments can influence our cognitive understanding, but also cognitive associations can impact normative judgments (Humphreys & Latour, 2013). These relationships are important to understand because they help to explain, for example, how media sources such as newspapers serve to shape societal opinions and values as well as mirror them (Deephouse, 1996; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). For practitioners, understanding the types of legitimacy and the strategies available to increase them may also prove valuable for an organization or sector (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Lamin & Zaheer, 2012; Scherer et al., 2013).

Also valuable for practitioners is understanding the significance of categorization and labeling to the legitimacy process (Hsu & Hannan, 2005; McKendrick et al. 2003; Navis & Glynn, 2010). Developing and embedding a category that resonates with the public is critical to achieving cognitive legitimacy (Kennedy, 2008). When organizations belong to a category, they are more readily evaluated and talked about by audiences. Categories help audiences make sense of, evaluate, and compare organizations in the same or different categories.

Another important concept in legitimacy studies is organizational density (Carroll & Hannan, 1989; Hannan & Freeman, 1984). In their influential article about the European automobile industry, Hannan, Carroll, Dundon, and Torres (1995) concluded that the number of organizations involved in a particular activity confers legitimacy on that organizational form. Baum and Powell (1995) took issue with Hannan and his colleagues' assertion regarding density and legitimacy, indicating that legitimacy is a multidimensional concept and the focus on density alone does not capture its various facets. In addition, Baum and Powell recommended analysis of media archives as a method to study legitimation. Given the various viewpoints on and concepts related to legitimacy, it soon became apparent that a number of perspectives - and organizational types - would be necessary to investigate this multifaceted concept.

Research Objective

Suchman (1995) highlights two approaches to legitimacy studies - institutional and strategic - and heeds scholars to consider both to inform their research. An institutional approach to legitimacy focuses on cultural pressures on the sector, rather than agency, that determine legitimacy parameters. In contrast, the strategic or instrumental approach affords agency more control over the legitimation process. This perspective focuses on strategies that organizations use to gain, maintain, or repair legitimacy. Suchman suggests that integrating both perspectives into legitimacy studies will serve researchers well because the institutional landscape leaves room for some agency control, though this control may be tempered by institutional dynamics. The research in this dissertation relies on both perspectives to gain more insight into the legitimation process of existing and emerging sectors. With regard to the existing sector, the goal was to better understand the issues and factors related to the evolution of the sector's cognitive legitimacy. Concerning the emerging sector, the goal was to better understand the issues and factors related to the sector's legitimacy as it is evolving.

An important difference in the analysis of the two sectors was thus that the existing sector already enjoyed legitimacy. However, legitimacy is a "fluid" concept (Humphreys & LaTour, 2013) and changes over time because values and perceptions change. The investigation of the existing sector involved mapping public perception in one study and theme development in another to determine how our understanding of what is legitimate develops. Legitimacy was thus viewed from the outside looking in.

In contrast to an existing sector, an emerging sector begins with a lack of legitimacy and has to gain it. There is little outside perception of the organizations, and thus organizations pursue strategies to increase their regulative, normative, and cognitive legitimacy. The investigation of the emerging sector therefore entailed examining the perceptions of the actors involved in the sector as they relate to the legitimation process, from the inside looking out.

Viewed separately, we see institutional drivers and constraints facing each sector; taken together, we get a unique view of legitimacy development over time, as well as insight into the challenges and opportunities for legitimacy development - and organizational strategies - that institutional factors create.

The broader aim of the research is to contribute to the knowledge of the sectors in general and their legitimation processes in specific, utilizing new methods or building on existing ones to do so. For researchers this is exciting because we venture into unchartered organizational territory. For practitioners the outcomes and conclusions are potentially helpful as they point to institutional elements and strategic considerations that may not have been otherwise distinct.

Research Questions

Strict adherence to a particular approach to legitimacy, whether institutional or strategic or a specific focus within those traditions, serves to "subtly but profoundly balkanize the debate" (Suchman, 1995, p. 572). While the individual studies in this dissertation may borrow more from one tradition than another, taken together they underscore the necessity of both and respond to the primary question this research seeks to answer:

> *How do institutional and strategic perspectives on organizational legitimacy inform the legitimacy strategies of organizations?*

Once an organizational form's practices and identity have been accepted by the public and ingrained in its collective mind, then we can speak of cognitive legitimacy. Examining the road to taken-for-grantedness is once again different to analyzing the process of legitimacy attainment or maintenance.

The first study, presented in chapter two, researches an existing sector's legitimacy and employs framing analysis to illustrate the importance of categorization and identity to the cognitive process (Glynn & Navis, 2013; McKendrick, Jaffee, Carroll, & Khessina, 2003). Articles from two "prestige," agenda-setting broadsheets - the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* - are analyzed over a 26-year period to reveal changes in the way nongovernmental organizations have been framed over time (Carvalho & Burgess, 2005; Holt & Barkemeyer, 2010; Jordan, 1993). Previous research has shown that frames are indicators of both normative and cognitive legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996; Humphreys & LaTour, 2013). The research in study one therefore aims to answer the following question:

> *To what extent is the legitimation process of nongovernmental organizations reflected in the media?*

While the first study focuses on media frames and representation, the second study is an explorative examination of the way nonprofit organizations were talked about in scholarly articles from 1990-2010 and what the implications are for legitimacy. The research asserts that the way we discuss organizations can reinforce or reshape our concept of legitimacy for those organizations. One of the primary concepts in the second study is isomorphism. Isomorphism occurs when organizations adopt the form, practices, and/or procedures of existing organizations in order to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Specifically, the focus in the second study centers on the adoption of language and how the changing scholarly discourse reflects the professionalization perspective of research on non-profit organizations

(NPOs). Professionalization has implications for obtaining and maintaining legitimacy as well as for the identity of the non-profit sector. Topic modeling was employed to discover themes in the discourse, and revealed discernible changes in the academic research agenda on non-profit organizations. The research in study two seeks to respond to the following question:

How is the adoption of the language of business expressed through themes in the academic research on nonprofit organizations?

The first two studies involve existing organizations and analyzing archival data. They focus more on the processes of legitimacy as its parameters evolve to accommodate changing social values. The goal of the third and fourth studies was to research the legitimation process in an emerging sector. The edible insect sector in the Netherlands was identified as an emerging sector and thus became the subject of investigation. As new organizations emerge, they suffer from a liability of newness (Stinchcombe, 1965) that threatens their success. They require legitimacy in order to overcome this liability of newness. Aldrich and Fiol (1994) suggest organizational, intraorganizaional, interorganizational, and institutional strategies that emerging organizations can pursue to enhance their legitimacy. The third study analyzes the legitimation strategies employed by the sector, and maps the sector's progress in the legitimation process. The research in study three is guided by the following question:

How has the edible insect sector in the Netherlands gained legitimacy despite lacking regulatory approval for its products?

The fourth study researches legitimacy strategies from a policy angle. Whereas the third study identifies where a particular sector is in its legitimacy acquisition process and the legitimation strategies that have been and are being implemented to establish support from various stakeholders, this study focuses specifically on influencing policy and identifies perceived gaps - according to actors within the Dutch edible insect sector - in the sector's approach to gaining more attention from policymakers. The goal of study four was to answer the following research question:

What are the perceived gaps in the legitimacy strategies of the Dutch edible insect sector?

The objective is to respond to the individual research questions involving existing and emerging organizations in order to glean the information necessary to answer the primary research question of the dissertation. It is also hoped that the research presented here adds to the body of literature on NGOs and NPOs regarding sector

development (e.g, Salamon, 1994), media framing and public perception (e.g., Hale, 2007), articulation in academic literature (e.g., Laasonen, Fougère, & Kourala, 2012), themes (e.g., Anheier, 1990), and legitimacy (e.g., Claeyè & Jackson, 2012). Concerning the edible insect sector, the aim is to contribute to the literature on the sector itself (e.g., Van Huis, 2015), emerging organizations and legitimacy (e.g., Rao, Chandy, & Prabhu, 2008), legitimacy strategies (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Suchman, 1995; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002), institutional entrepreneurship (Battilana, Leca, & Boxenbaum, 2009; David, Sine, & Haveman, 2013), and institutional linkages, especially as related to policy influence (Baum & Oliver, 1991; Shiffman & Smith, 2007).

Methodology

Each chapter details the methodology employed for that particular study. The data sources and collection techniques used in the studies vary depending on the research question and objectives. Some studies required a combination of techniques in order to provide sufficient analysis of the subject and a response to the research question.

Quantitative methods involve the use of theory to guide the research process and test assumptions (Boeije, 2010). As such, they are generally more deductive. Quantitative research is conducive to prediction and generalizability based on the numerical results and statistics that it produces. Qualitative methods, on the other hand, are often used to study developments or situations that cannot be quantified, and help in discovering patterns and meaning. They are generally more inductive in nature. However, theory testing and theory building are not necessarily exclusive to one approach or the other (Babbie, 2004). With those points in mind, below is a brief outline of the methods used in the research.

The first study combines inductive and deductive methods to determine media frames over a specified period of time. Analysis of the media frames reveals patterns that reflect the development of cognitive legitimacy of an organizational form. The second study employs topic modeling to discover themes in a large database of text. This quantitative method proves useful in illustrating academia's adoption of professional vocabulary in its research of nonprofit organizations. The topic modeling findings are corroborated using term frequency-inverse document frequency, or tf.idf, a statistical method which reveals the importance of a word in a document or collection of documents.

In study three, legitimacy is viewed through another lens. In this explorative research, interviews are conducted with actors in an emerging sector to gain a better understanding of the sector, the legitimacy strategies employed, and the legitimation process as a whole. For the fourth study, interviews are analyzed using theory as a

guide and a policy framework as a tool to determine how one group of institutional entrepreneurs might improve its legitimacy and chances of success.

Outline of Dissertation

The remaining chapters of the dissertation are organized as follows. The four studies in the following chapters examine organizational legitimacy from three perspectives: the media, academia, and industry. Chapters two and three involve the media and academia and adopt an institutional view, with legitimacy as a "condition reflecting perceived consonance" with laws, norms, and cognitive frameworks (Scott, 2014, p. 72). Chapters four and five examine legitimacy from a more instrumental perspective, focusing on strategies that organizations can implement to obtain legitimacy and a license to operate (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990). Together the studies consider the influence of existing institutions and events, as well as the potential of agency and strategy, on the legitimation process. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a summary of the main findings, the contributions of the research, limitations of the studies, and possible avenues for future research.

Chapter 2

NGOs in the news: The road to taken-for-grantedness

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Abstract

The proliferation of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) since the 1970s has generated a wealth of research as to the causes and implications of the rise of this sector. Public awareness of NGOs and their activities has grown as well, at least in part due to increased media coverage of the organizations and the situations to which they respond. Although NGOs are not new to global polity, media attention to them as a sector only really began to take off in the 1990s. Using quantitative and qualitative analysis of two international newspapers from 1985-2010, this study explores the legitimation process of NGOs and examines the role of categorization and labeling in this process. The results show that the establishment of a distinct label in the media served to propel cognitive recognition of NGOs, and that media coverage reflects changes in cognitive legitimacy over time.

Introduction

The 1970s and 1980s were witness to an explosive growth in the number of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (Union of International Associations, 2011-2012), yet not until the 1990s did the organizations become publicly recognized as a sector rather than as individual activist organizations. Though the strength of NGOs may lie in their individual identity and the causes for which they advocate, their power is due at least in part to a shared identity that took root in the 1990s and served to stimulate recognition – and legitimacy - and propel the sector into becoming a major player in the global arena.

According to Carroll and Hannan (1989), tracing the growth in number of organizations - that is, organizational density - over time should tell us something about their cognitive legitimacy. Hannan (1997) points out that the original density dependence theory suggests a relationship between cognitive legitimacy and density as one of strict reversibility, meaning that changes to density result in commensurate changes in legitimacy. However, the revised density dependence theory notes that a decline in density does not automatically result in a decline in legitimacy, just as a rise in organizations does not necessarily result in a rise in legitimacy beyond a certain point in organizational evolution. In an industry that already enjoys cognitive legitimacy, this status is not necessarily threatened if there are fewer organizations within that industry at any given time. The original postulation with regard to *obtaining* cognitive legitimacy, however, remains the same: density legitimates. However, McKendrick, Jaffee, Carroll, and Khessina (2003) indicate that density alone does not ensure legitimacy. They argue that acquiring cognitive legitimacy also requires a collective identity recognizable by the public.

Scholars have increasingly come to see the media as playing a pivotal role in the legitimation process of a sector (Andrews & Caren, 2010; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Glynn & Navis, 2013; Kennedy, 2008). The media increase public awareness and co-create a category and cognitive recognition (McKendrick et al., 2003; Navis & Glynn, 2010). When a group of organizations follows specific rules, doing so necessarily categorizes those organizations (Glynn & Abzug, 2002). This initial categorization creates a collective identity that can foster legitimacy and attract resources. By being able to name the category specifically, audiences place organizations into a particular form (Hsu & Hannan, 2005); an organization's identity is comprised in part of belonging to this form (Ganesh, 2003; Hsu & Hannan, 2005; Pólos, Hannan, & Carroll, 2002).

The existence alone of a group of organizations operating within the same domain is thus not sufficient to achieve legitimacy. Audience designation of these actors into a particular group with a collective label is fundamental in the legitimacy process (Fiol & Romanelli, 2012) because labels allow for increased recognition by

audiences, thus enhancing overall cognition (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). In the case of NGOs, Salamon and Anheier indicated in 1992 that without a common understanding of what the sector is and an effective term with which to define it, development of the field might be impeded.

Given the emphasis by leading scholars in the field on the importance of NGOs to the global order (Boli & Thomas, 1997; Salamon, 1994; Teegen, Doh, & Vachani, 2004; Yaziji & Doh, 2009), studying NGO legitimacy appears to be a relevant undertaking. Although Salamon (1994) stresses that the public was already conscious of organizations such as Amnesty International, Red Cross, and Greenpeace, the public did not identify these organizations *as a group* at that time. These organizations had common features – for example, nonprofit, nongovernmental, international – and included private organizations, international pressure groups, and voluntary agencies (Martens, 2002), but the term "nongovernmental organization" was not widely used in the media. This began to change in the mid-1990s; this study centers around that change and what we might learn about NGO legitimacy from it.

Specifically, this research investigates when NGOs obtained taken-for-grantedness. It does so by tracing the emergence, rise, and framing of "nongovernmental organization" in print media. We maintain that mapping the use of the term "nongovernmental organization" and the way NGOs are framed in two leading international newspapers will reveal changes in the organizations' cognitive legitimacy. This approach allows us to "recognize when changes in population characteristics and boundaries reflect deep changes in the social and cultural standing of the population" (Hsu & Hannan, 2005, p. 482). It is thus expected that tracing the development of NGOs as viewed through the lens of the media will not only provide information on NGOs but on social developments in general.

This paper contributes to the literature on nongovernmental organizations by showing when the public became aware of the organizations as a sector (Salamon, 1994), the importance of "nongovernmental organization" as an identifying label (Glynn & Navis, 2013; McKendrick et al., 2003), and changes in the way NGOs have been discussed in newspapers over time (De Souza, 2010). The study resulted in a number of findings about nongovernmental organizations that to our knowledge have not been previously reported. Regarding organizational legitimacy, this research points to changes in the legitimacy perceptions of nongovernmental organizations, and illustrates how newspaper coverage reflects shifts in understanding (Kennedy, 2008; Pollock & Rindova, 2003) of NGOs.

Organizational Legitimacy

Societal values dictate organizational behavior to the extent that not to operate in line with these values would threaten the survival of the organization (Parsons, 1956; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). This principle is the foundation of organizational legitimacy. A legitimate organization is one that has been determined by society or a particular audience within society to be operating according to existing social values, norms, and expectations (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Suchman, 1995).

Suchman (1995) identifies three types of organizational legitimacy: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. Pragmatic legitimacy involves an organization providing a good or service to a constituency and in return receiving support from that constituency. Pragmatic legitimacy is often reflected in policies and performance standards. Moral legitimacy is granted by audiences when the organization is judged to be ethically correct based on societal values by a segment of society or society-at-large (Bitektine, 2011). It involves an evaluation of an organization's products, procedures, and structures as "the right thing to do" (Suchman, 1995, p. 579). Put simply, pragmatic legitimacy reflects an organization's "responsiveness" whereas moral legitimacy reflects an organization's propriety (Suchman, 1995, p. 578).

In contrast to pragmatic and moral legitimacy, Suchman (1995) states that an organization obtains cognitive legitimacy when it helps society make sense of and bring order to its environment, or when the organization has become so institutionalized that we could not imagine things being any other way. In their discussion of taken-for-grantedness, Aldrich and Fiol (1994) indicate that cognitive legitimation is the result of awareness of, or familiarity with, a product or field. When an organization reaches taken-for-grantedness, it becomes less susceptible to scrutiny of its right to exist (Bitektine, 2011; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). It is not surprising, then, that cognitive legitimacy is the most difficult form of legitimacy to obtain (Suchman, 1995). However, Deephouse and Suchman (2008) advise researchers to remember that obtaining one type of legitimacy may result in increasing one or both of the other types as well.

Media, Framing, and Legitimacy

Media attention is defined here as "the amount of prominence or coverage that an actor, event, or issue receives" (Andrews & Caren, 2010, p. 843). It can be important to obtaining legitimacy and access to resources (Kennedy, 2008). Media coverage can also be used to study and operationalize legitimacy (Baum & Powell, 1995). In their research of the automobile industry, Hannan, Carroll, Dundon, and Torres (1995)

found that the cognitive legitimacy of the industry increased as the news stories about automobiles increased. The more the information about the new organizational form spreads through the news and then to the public, the closer the form comes to taken-for-granted status (Hannan et al., 1995). Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) maintain that the values and norms of a society determine what is considered legitimate, and these values and norms are expressed in written and other communication channels. Pollock and Rindova (2003, p. 632) refer to the media as a "propagator" of legitimacy; Deephouse and Suchman (2008) state that the media is an indicator of legitimacy. They argue that because it can influence and reflect societal opinion, it has an important part to play in legitimacy research.

One of the ways that legitimacy can be studied in the media is through frame analysis. Frames in media discourse such as newspaper articles both reflect and shape public opinion. They are indicative of social values, but can also serve to shift those values and create meaning for the audience (Entman, 1993; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). A media frame can be defined as "a central organizing idea" which is utilized to "make sense of relevant events, suggesting what is at issue" (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3). Matthes (2012, p. 249) describes frames as "selective views on issues – views that construct reality in a certain way, leading to different evaluations and recommendations." Analyzing frames in the media can provide a bigger picture with regard to social developments and processes (Giles & Shaw, 2009; Reese, 2007; Van Gorp, 2007), as well as how frames communicate values and their potential to influence audience understanding and cognition (Ball-Rokeach & Rokeach, 1987; Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997). In their study of framing and legitimacy of casinos and online gambling, Humphreys and LaTour (2013) also found that media frames can influence cognitive legitimacy. They maintain that frames have the power to direct audience attention to or from particular aspects of an organization, industry, product, or issue. The authors indicate that in so doing, frames may also reveal fluctuations in legitimacy. In their analysis of British newspaper coverage of climate change from 1985-2003, Carvalho and Burgess (2005) showed how the meanings associated with climate change shifted over time; coverage was influenced by social and political developments as well as the publications' own ethos. They thus concluded that "Values and ideological cultures are key to explain variations in the media's reinterpretations of scientific knowledge on climate change" (Carvalho & Burgess, 2005; p. 1467).

Framing has also proven to be a useful tool in previous studies on nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (Deacon, Fenton, & Walker, 1995; Hale, 2007; Ihlen, Figenschou, & Larsen, 2015). For example, Deacon et al. (1995) research media portrayal of voluntary organizations in Britain; Hale (2007) examines the portrayal of nonprofit organizations in the media using agenda setting and framing theories; and Ihlen et al. (2015) investigate how NGOs develop and adapt framing strategies. Prior research on legitimacy and media frames has shown that media evaluations affect

normative legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). However, Humphreys and LaTour (2013) maintain that media frames do not just result in changes to normative evaluations, but can directly impact cognitive evaluations as well. Their research revealed that when the new label "gaming" replaced the old label "gambling," non-gamblers responded positively and "had more associations with the legitimate practice after being shown the new label, "gaming"" (Humphreys & LaTour, 2013, p. 788). The authors concluded that normative legitimacy judgments had been mediated by cognitive legitimacy. (Note the distinction between the use of the term 'label' by Humphreys and LaTour [2013] and Hsu and Hannan [2005]; the former use it in the context of frame name or description, while for the latter the term represents categorical classifications.)

Labeling is part of the categorization process involved in organizational identity formation (Glynn & Navis, 2013). Category can be defined as "a conceptual label or set of meanings that are applied to the entity, thereby distilling it into a condensed form" (Glynn & Navis, 2013, p. 1126). External audiences need categories to help them make sense of organizations so they can determine what the organizations do and how well they are doing it compared to others in the category or in other categories. Simply stated, categories provide audiences with a frame of reference.

Category membership has implications for both legitimacy and identity. Organizations that belong to a category can be more readily evaluated and talked about, and are therefore more likely to enjoy greater legitimacy than those that do not (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). An organization's identity is formed in part by the category or categories in which it is a member (Glynn & Navis, 2013). Additionally, as some categories are more legitimate than others, organizations may try to identify with those whose association brings the most potential benefits (Glynn & Navis, 2013). As McKendrick et al. (2003) showed, however, association alone is not enough to secure cognitive legitimacy. Developing – and embedding – a category that resonates with the public is critical to achieving cognitive legitimacy (Kennedy, 2008). The media is one vehicle for embeddedness. Inclusion of organizations into a specific category by the media makes them identifiable as a new population (Kennedy, 2008). Belonging to a category does not preclude organizational change, however. New categories can emerge as the social context changes, and both firms and audiences can play a role in this process using "cultural narratives, frames, or labels" (Glynn & Navis, 2013, p. 1132).

Humphreys (2010) showed how changes in the labels attached to casinos in the media affected industry legitimacy. Once described as places of crime and prostitution, casinos in the United States have more recently become synonymous with entertainment and, in the case of Las Vegas, with luxurious hotspots (Humphreys, 2010). The author attributes this change in part to shifts in semantic emphasis in newspaper articles which can both reflect developments in industry legislation as well as reveal topic selection by the journalist. Topic selection impacts cognitive

legitimacy in that the existence of a subject in newspaper pages over time creates awareness. The words used to write about the topics influence normative legitimacy as certain aspects are highlighted or particular values are emphasized. Determining what was newsworthy about the organizations and assigning specific words to them impacted organizational identity and legitimacy, and thus helped change the face of the industry.

Media attention to NGOs has also been a critical part of sector development. The following section will discuss NGO status in the United Nations, NGO proliferation, and their road to taken-for-grantedness.

Nongovernmental Organizations: Definition and Rise

United Nations

The literature is rich with definitions for "nongovernmental organization" (Agg, 2006; Florini, 2008; Martens, 2002; Salamon, 1994; Spar & La Mure, 2003) making the term both approachable and evasive at the same time. This study uses the United Nations' requirements for consultative status as the defining features of an NGO. Given the governing body's institutional standing and its role in NGO evolution, this appears to be a logical approach.

Article 71 of the Charter of the United Nations in 1945 marked the beginning of growing use of the term non-governmental organization internationally. (See Charnovitz, 1997 and 2006 for a detailed history of NGOs.)

> The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.

Although Article 71 recognized that NGOs could play a role at the UN, this role was not clearly elucidated at the time nor was the meaning of nongovernmental organization specified. However, it was stipulated that in order for an NGO to be eligible for consultative status, the organization must be non-profit, non-violent, not a school or political party, and not exclusive in its aid (Willetts, 2000). Willetts (2002) attributes the use of the term "nongovernmental organization" over alternatives to the term's generality. We hold that this generality and a common umbrella for a group of diverse organizations ultimately facilitated public categorization and labeling of the organizations, thereby contributing to the cognitive legitimacy of the sector as a whole.

The United Nations not only provided categorical parameters for defining NGOs, but also participation in UN conferences conferred regulative and normative legitimacy on the organizations. The 1990s were especially important to the legitimacy process. During this time, NGOs received more recognition from the UN, and the discourse regarding NGO involvement in UN affairs began to change as well. The granting of official observer status to the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1990 was a critical move toward NGO recognition (Willetts, 2000). Furthermore, NGO participation in UN conferences led to major stirrings of change (Willetts, 2000). The most significant changes occurred during and after Habitat II, the UN conference in Istanbul in 1996, so named for its focus on human settlement and living environment conditions. For the first time, NGOs were officially included in the negotiating process, and the discourse surrounding UN-NGO cooperation moved from one of consultation to partnership (Willetts, 2000). In May, 2000, the discourse again took another tone when UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for even greater NGO participation in global policy: "Today, I am asking you NGOs to be both leaders and partners: where necessary, to lead and inspire governments to live up to your ideals; where appropriate, to work with governments to achieve their goals" (United Nations, 2000). The UN was now asking NGOs not just to be partners, but to be leaders in pursuit of policy goals as well.

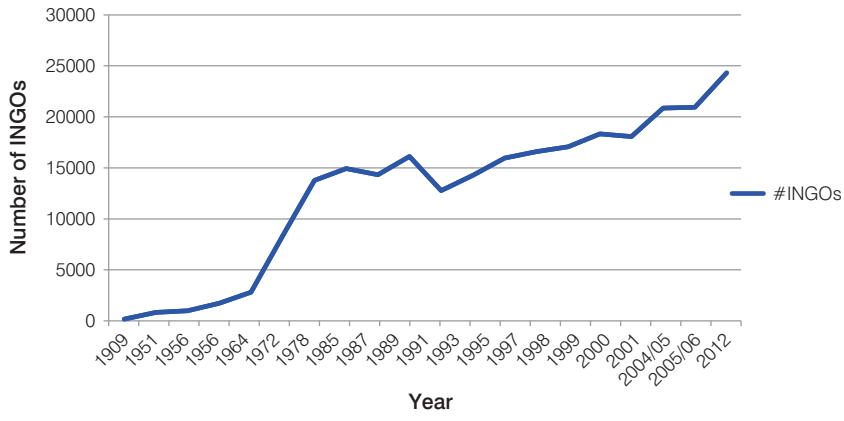
Beginning in 2008, the discourse at the United Nations included aid effectiveness when the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) published "Towards a strengthened framework for aid effectiveness" (Manning, 2008), a study commissioned by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Aid effectiveness had been the subject of the High Level forums in Rome in 2003 and Paris in 2005, but the UN officially put aid effectiveness and civil society accountability on its agenda with documents such as the one in 2008, which was published in preparation for the third High Level Forum held the same year. High Level forums on aid effectiveness are an initiative of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], are co-sponsored by, among other institutions, the United Nations and the World Bank, and were established to discuss how to achieve the best results possible from aid funds and programs. They are not official UN events.

The Rise of NGOs

The rise of the NGO has been thoroughly documented by multiple scholars (Boli, 2006; Charnovitz, 1997; Doh & Guay, 2006; Mathews, 1997; Salamon, 1994; Skjelsbaek, 1971; Teegen et al., 2004; Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Although estimations as to the specific number of NGOs worldwide vary depending on how the term is defined and who is doing the counting, the NGO sector has been growing for decades. Fig. 1 illustrates this growth from 1909 – 2012, based on statistics published by the Union of International Associations (UIA) in the *Yearbook of International Organizations.* According to UIA,

there were 2795 international NGOs in 1972. This number jumped to 13,768 in 1985, and 16,113 in 1991. In 2005/06, there were 20,928 active, confirmed international NGOs and in 2012 the number rose to 24,310. A brief summary of how and why the rise in NGOs occurred will be provided below as a backdrop for the rest of the study.

Figure 1 International Nongovernmental Organization (INGO) Growth 1909-2012



Source: Union of International Associations, *Yearbook of International Organizations*, various years.

Salamon (1994) attributes four crises with initiating the individual, institutional, and government action that fueled the NGO boom: the inability of Western states to meet growing social welfare costs; the effects of the oil crisis in the early 1970s and the economic recession in the early 1980s on developing countries; increased environmental concerns; and the failure of socialism that was evidenced by economic regression in the mid-1970s. He explains that these crises, combined with technological advances in communication and an economic boom in the 1960s and early 1970s that created middle class leadership in developing countries that would help establish non-profit organizations in their countries, provided fertile ground for the development of the third sector. He maintains, however, that in 1994, although the NGO movement was growing, NGOs had not yet become "a serious presence in public consciousness, policy circles, the media or scholarly research" (Salamon, 1994, p. 121). This is not to say that the public was unaware of individual organizations such as Amnesty International, the Red Cross, and Greenpeace or that no scholarly research on NGOs was being conducted. But the term nongovernmental organization and the acronym NGO were not yet widely known among the public, nor was the public aware of an NGO *sector*.

Doh and Teegen (2002) state that NGO involvement in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa in the 1980s marked the entrance of NGOs as significant players in the international business arena. McGann and Johnstone (2006, p. 66) list the key events in the NGO "revolution" as the political transformation in Poland in the 1980s, the 1992 Earth Summit, the 1994 "Fifty Years is Enough" campaign, and the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle. While scholars may not agree upon which specific events influenced the NGO move to the global stage, the combination of these events led to the NGO period of "empowerment" that began in the 1990s (Charnovitz, 1997).

NGO newspaper exposure also began to rise in the 1990s which experts attribute to a number of factors. Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers (2005) attribute the rise to more strategic, assertive media campaigns, citing Amnesty International's increase in press releases in 1993. Chandler (2001) charges that the media surge was due to a transition in the provision of humanitarian relief from a non-political standpoint to one that was focused on influencing policy and behavior. He states that NGOs sought the press to advocate their causes and the press was eager to report on shocking stories and anguished victims. Keck and Sikkink (1999) credit NGO success in the 1990s to the rise of transnational advocacy networks. The sharing of funds, personnel, information, and services allowed the networks to more effectively and extensively publicize and act on specific issues throughout the world (Keck & Sikkink, 1999; Sikkink, 1993). Bimber, Flanagin, and Stohl (2005) maintain that developments in internet-based communication technologies (ICT) changed the face of collective action by allowing people from various backgrounds and geographical regions to connect and organize quickly and relatively cheaply.

The change in NGO status at the UN, continued growth in numbers, intra and interorganizational collaboration, and increased and more assertive communication appear to be part of a larger institutional shift that resulted in meaningful consequences for NGO legitimacy. Also fundamental to the legitimacy process was a general understanding of what NGOs are and what they do, and a common category label with which to identify them (McKendrick & Carroll, 2001). One of the vehicles to communicate and *embed* this category and identity, and therefore increase NGO legitimacy, was print media. The following section will explain how the proliferation of the term nongovernmental organization was analyzed and how the newspaper discourse about NGOs changed from 1985-2010.

Methods

Data Collection

A content analysis of two English language newspapers was conducted for the period 1985-2010. The analysis focuses on the category "nongovernmental organizations" in an international context. As previously discussed, categories increase recognition of a group of organizations as belonging to a particular form and thus raise audience cognition (Hsu & Hannan, 2005).

The newspapers used in the study – the *New York Times and* the *Financial Times*– were selected based on region, circulation, and agenda-setting capacity. According to a 2011 European Media & Marketing Survey (EMS) conducted by Synovate Research Group, the *Financial Times* was the number one international brand in Europe for daily print and web usage combined ("No. 1," 2011). A 2011 study conducted by ComScore, an independent digital survey company, indicated that *The New York Times* was the number one ranking global online newspaper (Durrani, 2011). In addition, the two newspapers are considered elite media outlets which can both reflect and impact legitimacy (Deegan, Rankin, & Tobin, 2002; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Vergne, 2011). They have the ability to set the agenda for policy makers and the public (Carvalho & Burgess, 2005; Holt & Barkemeyer, 2010; Islam & Deegan, 2010; Jordan, 1993; Mazur & Lee, 1993) as well as other news sources (Nisbet & Huge, 2006). Thus, although the newspapers may cater to a different readership and present a different focus – 'center, right business' versus 'liberal news story and editorial' – they were chosen for this study due to their agenda-setting capacity. Moreover, as previously indicated, media accounts reflect the development of cognitive legitimacy (Baum & Powell, 1995; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Hannan et al, 1995; Humphreys & LaTour, 2013) and are therefore useful in studies of organizational legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

A keyword search in the LexisNexis archive was conducted for the search terms "nongovernmental organi*ation" - the asterisk representing either an "s" or "z" - from 1985-2010. Both "non-governmental" and "non governmental" resulted in substantially fewer hits in both newspapers, while "nongovernmental organi*ation" resulted in more hits and included the articles which appeared for the other search terms. A total of 1611 articles were found in the *New York Times* and 3152 articles in the *Financial Times*. The purpose was to determine how many articles included the search term nongovernmental organi*ation and not the number of times the term was used in total. In addition, it is important to note that letters to the editor and obituaries were included. The reason for this is that we are studying the categorization, labeling, and legitimacy of a sector. Being named and referred to in either of these contexts is still appropriate to this research given increased salience. Mazur (2009) maintains that quantity can have greater audience impact than content. The year 1985 was chosen

as a begin date for the study for practical reasons. Given the focus in the academic literature on the 1990s, we wanted to go back at least five years prior to 1990 to determine what, if any, the trend in the newspapers might be. Also, the LexisNexis archive of the *Financial Times* begins in 1982 so we were unable to access earlier files via the database.

A LexisNexis search of the following terms was also conducted: relief agency, aid agency, voluntary organization, volunteer organization, humanitarian organization, nonprofit organization, non-profit organization, not-for-profit organization, charitable organization, and international nonprofit organization. The objective of this search was to confirm whether or not "nongovernmental organization" was the most appropriate term for the organizations being researched in the media. All of the terms above produced too few hits to be representative or included organizations beyond the scope of this study. For example, a search of the term "nonprofit organization" resulted in more hits than other terms, but included national and regional organizations dedicated to any number of causes from the arts to athletic activities. Hence, this term was not compatible with the definition of NGO. The terms relief agency and aid agency came close to the definition, but a search of these terms also included articles on *governmental* relief and aid agencies at national and regional levels; this does not meet the criteria of nongovernmental. Other terms in the search included voluntary organization, volunteer organization, international nonprofit organization, not-for-profit organization, charitable organization, and humanitarian organization. Of these terms, voluntary organization seemed to come closest to what we call international NGOs, but the number of hits was not significant.

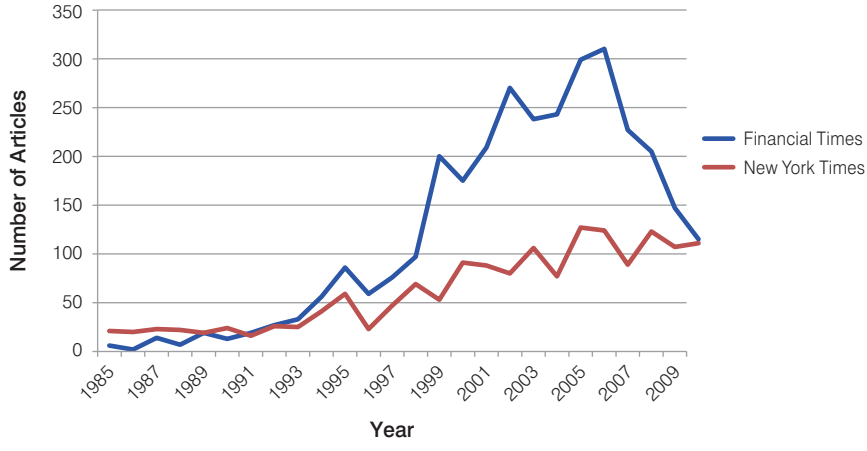
In addition to mapping term frequency, a sample of 357 articles from the total number of articles between 1985-2010 was randomly selected and analyzed using a framing tool. Given this total, a sample size of 357 was necessary in order to be 95% confident that the population percentage is within 5% of what we find in the sample (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 89). The original sample consisted of 396 articles and included 56 articles (47 in the *FT* and 9 in the *NYT*) regarding quasi non-governmental organizations (quango) or quasi-governmental organizations. Given that quangos are a highly contested issue in the UK, the prevalence of articles about them was greater in the FT than the NYT. The sample was first coded with the quango and quasi-governmental articles, but due to issues of politics and autonomy related to the organizations, they were excluded (see Greve, Flinders, & Van Thiel, 1999). The number of articles coded per newspaper per year was determined using a ratio of sum-to-total.

It also is important to analyze the growth pattern in the number of articles about NGOs. A common characterization of changes in the number of articles dealing with NGOs, as shown in Figure 2, seems to support the idea that the occurrence of the term nongovernmental organization follows a trend line with a positive slope over the

26-year period. The number of articles on NGOs in the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times* was also statistically analyzed, separately and combined, for the period 1985-2010. The relatively short time series implies that the econometric models have to remain quite basic (Hagedoorn & Van Kranenburg, 2003).

The data in Figure 2 were subjected to regression analyses and curve fitting in order to see what patterns, linear and curvilinear, could be found. The patterns for three regression models were analyzed. The regression analyses focuses on the amount of variance explained, adjusted R^2. Adjusted R^2 considers the amount of variation, 0-100, that is explained by the patterns in the number of articles over the time period. It takes into account sample size as well as the number of predictors in the regression model (Field, 2009, pp. 221-222). As time series data are prone to autocorrelation, which means that observations are dependent because of the time lag between them, the Prais-Winsten estimation method was used to correct for this (Wooldridge, 2013). Regression results after Prais-Winsten correction were reported including the Durbin-Watson statistic as a measure for autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson values range from 0-4, values close to 2 indicate absence of serial correlation; see Field, 2009, pp. 220-221). To check if the strength of the relationships differed, the unstandardized regression coefficients of the *Financial Times* and *New York Times* articles were compared (Paternoster, Brame, Mazerolle, & Piquero, 1998). Finally, by means of curve fitting, we checked which approach (linear, quadratic, cubic, etc.) explained most of the variance in the data. The principle of parsimony in which simple curves are preferred over more complex ones was followed.

Figure 2 *New York Times* and *Financial Times* "nongovernmental organization" mentions 1985-2010



Coding

The articles were coded using a frame identification system based on De Souza (2010) who identified the following frames as relevant for NGOs: Do Good, Protest, Partner, and Public Accountability. Where an article appeared to contain more than one frame, the dominant frame - based upon article context - was documented. Specific words and phrases were cataloged to substantiate frame selection.

Because assigning the articles to the most appropriate frame is critical to the research, it is useful to define the frames in more detail. The Do Good frame focuses on important, productive work that NGOs have done in recognizing and reducing societal problems. The Protest frame includes articles that involve NGOs speaking out against government or business activity that they deem unethical, harmful, irresponsible, illegal, or threatening. Articles assigned to the Partner frame highlight collaboration with government and other sectors. The Public Accountability frame questions NGO activity, specifically concerning issues such as corruption, accountability, and poor management.

After an initial trial of coding using these frames, it became clear that additional frames were needed in order to more adequately capture the discourse. To the frames above, Expert, Government Resistance, and Other were added. Expert was used when NGOs were interviewed for their view on a subject or provided information. Government Resistance was used when the context in which the NGO was discussed had to do with limiting NGO rights in a particular country because a national government was skeptical of the NGO's operations and/or concerned about NGO intentions. "Other" was marked when the term nongovernmental organization was mentioned, but the context did not meet any of the other frame criteria. That being said, the mere mention of nongovernmental organization points to increased media salience and thus cognitive recognition (Hsu & Hannan, 2005; Kiousis, 2011; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

When the final coding tool was completed, the tool was tested for reliability using a sample of 136 articles. The articles were coded by the first author and a colleague not participating in the project. Where there was a discrepancy in the codes, the coders discussed the articles and reached agreement, following a consensus-coding approach (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Intercoder reliability of the pre-consensus codes was 86% (kappa: .53, indicating fair agreement; see Fleiss, Levin, & Paik, 2003). During the coding process, the first author tested for coder drift two months after the original coding by randomly selecting 30 articles from the sample and recoding them. This resulted in a 97% agreement rate.

The research combines deductive and inductive approaches to analysis. For example, it begins with a quantitative analysis informed by legitimacy theory and the concepts of density dependence and identity. This analysis alone did not provide sufficient information regarding the development of nongovernmental legitimacy.

Therefore, a frame analysis using an existing framework was also conducted. When frames in the data that were not represented were found, they were added to reflect what was discovered in the data set. As Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) indicate, the analysis process is circular rather than linear and developing explanations and verifying them involves moving back and forth through the data, literature, and theory. The final four NGO frames were arrived at inductively through this process.

Results

A search of related terms revealed that "nongovernmental organization" was indeed the most appropriate term for us to use in this research. Not only is nongovernmental organization the term used in United Nations documents and communications (see Willetts, 2000), but it also proved to be the narrowest of the terms available.

From 1985-2010, the term was mentioned in the *New York Times* in 1611 articles compared to 3152 in the *Financial Times* (after correcting for quangos and quasi-governmental organizations). The search showed that from 1985-2010 stories including the term "nongovernmental organization" increased considerably in both the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* (see Figure 2). Despite the difference in numbers of articles in the newspapers, the graph profiles showing the number of articles over time are quite similar. Mentions in the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* declined dramatically after 2005 and 2006, respectively, and had not yet returned to their 2006 level in 2010. In the *New York Times* in 1985, the term "non-governmental organization" appeared in 21 articles. By 1999, this would increase to 53. Coverage reached a peak in 2005 at 127 articles, and dropped to 111 in 2010. In the *Financial Times,* there were 6 articles in 1985, and 200 in 1999. A peak of 310 mentions was reached in 2006; this dropped to 115 in 2010. Very little reference to the term nongovernmental organization in the newspapers in 1985 was found, followed by a surge in the 1990s, a peak in the middle 2000s, and a decline of mentions thereafter.

Table 1 shows the results of the regression analyses revealing that for the *Financial Times, New York Times* and both newspapers combined there was a statistical significant model indicating a linear relationship in the number of articles on NGOs in the period 1985-2010. After Prais-Winsten correction, the Durbin-Watson statistic for the *New York Times* was closer to the value of 2 (indicating absence of auto-correlation), than for the *Financial Times* and for the newspapers combined. However, the data did not seem to indicate very serious problems regarding serial correlation (as values were not below 1). The data for the *New York Times* better fit a linear curve than the data for the *Financial Times* (as appears from R^2 values in Table 1). However, comparison of the unstandardized regression coefficients did not reveal a difference

in the regression slopes for the newspapers ($Z = 0.790$, $p = .43$). Curve fitting analyses showed, in general, that higher order curves (quadratic, cubic, power) or other curves (logarithmic, S-shaped, growth, exponential, logistic) did not substantially improve the amount of variance explained (in terms of adjusted R^2) in comparison to a linear curve (statistics withheld). All in all, the quantitative analyses indicated that there was a linear increase in the number of articles on NGOs in both the *Financial Times* and *New York Times* meaning that NGOs received more and more media coverage (resulting in greater public awareness) in the period 1985-2010.

Table 1 Results regression analyses predicting number of newspaper articles on NGOs in *Financial Times, New York Times,* and both newspapers combined, in the period 1985-2010.

Newspapers	B	SE B	β	Adjusted R^2	Durbin-Watson
Financial Times	7.39	3.45	.41*	.09	1.57
New York Times	4.70	0.40	.92***	.84	1.92
Newspapers combined	12.15	3.72	.56**	.26	1.67

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

As previously mentioned, the articles were coded using a framing tool. Table 2 shows the total results, and Table 3 shows the results in the time periods listed below. The time periods reflect the regulatory structure that was shaped by the United Nations; the newspaper articles echo the changes in these structures (Humphreys, 2010) and thus the transitions in NGO legitimacy.

Tables 2 and 3 show the framing results of the sample of the *Financial Times* (FT) and *New York Times* (NYT) articles. The "Do Good" frame was the dominant frame overall and remained stable in all time periods. From 1992-1999, the partner frame began to develop. For the period 2000-2007, "Partner" and "Expert" became important themes. The figures show that the Do Good, Partner, and Expert frames were the most common over time (31%, 16%, and 18%, respectively.).

A chi-square analysis revealed that there were statistically significant differences ($\chi^2(6, n = 357) = 37.0$, $p < .001$) in the frames used in the *Financial Times* and *New York Times* during the 1985-2010 period. The number of "Do Good" frames was relatively higher in the NYT than in the FT, whereas the "Protest" and "Accountability" frames occurred more often in the FT than in the NYT. The occurrence of the other frames did not differ between the two newspapers.

Media attention to nongovernmental organizations as a sector has thus been predominantly positive over time. Given the financial crisis and the UN aid

Table 2 NGO frames in the *Financial Times* and *New York Times*, 1985-2010 ($n = 357$).

Frame	# Articles	% Total
Do Good	109	31
Protest	51	14
Partner	58	16
Accountability	16	4
Expert	63	18
Government Resistance	26	7
Other	34	10
Total	357	100

Table 3 Framing Results.

Time Period	Do Good	Protest	Partner	Public Account.	Expert	Govt. Resistance	Other	Total
1985-1991	27	3	5	0	8	3	5	51
1992-1999	22	14	15	5	10	4	11	81
2000-2007	40	28	31	9	32	10	14	164
2008-2010	20	6	7	2	13	9	4	61
Total	109	51	58	16	63	26	34	**357**

Note. Account. = Accountability; Govt. = Government.

effectiveness discourse that began in 2008, we expected to see more articles in the public accountability frame between 2008 and 2010. The relatively few articles in this frame might be attributable to the sample size or the short span of three years in the final time period.

Further analysis of the frames resulted in four main categories and time periods that represent the broader changes (Boeije, 2010) in the depiction of NGOs in the newspapers over time. The categories include Protectors, Partners, Policymakers, and Providers. The data showed that until 1991, NGOs were viewed mainly as what are termed here as Protectors - individual organizations that deliver aid and advocacy. From 1992-1999, they became Partners, having gained increasing influence among international organizations. From 2000-2007, NGO involvement in government and business affairs continued to grow, as did their hand in policymaking. Beginning in

2008, aid effectiveness became a key theme at intergovernmental organizations such as the UN, OECD, and World Bank. While NGOs still retain significant influence, the shift from Policymaker to Provider of aid began to take place at this time. The categories reflect incremental shifts in the role of NGOs as depicted in the newspapers and the literature during the period 1985-2010, with perhaps the most striking shift taking place during the period 2000-2007 when the focus moved from NGOs as Partners to NGOs as Policymakers. Table 4 presents an overview of the shifts in framing. Examples of these shifts are provided in the newspaper excerpts below.

Table 4 NGO Media Frames.

Frame	Time period	Description
Protectors	? -1991	Individual organizations deliver aid and advocacy
Partners	1992-1999	Gaining access to more international organizations and exerting greater influence in multilateral negotiations
Policymakers	2000-2007	Growing NGO influence and power recognized by governments, international organizations, and business
Providers	2008- ?	Increasing focus on aid effectiveness

The findings show that in 1985 when the term nongovernmental organization was used in an article in the NYT and the FT, it was often used in the context of the organization doing something good for society, either providing aid that government could not or delivering aid more successfully than government:

> Local problems should be solved by local people, but the nongovernmental organizations are necessary because governments are not giving us what we need (Crossette, 1991, NYT).

> Small nongovernmental organisations whose representatives have reached the affected areas have proved to be more effective than the official machinery (Ahmed & Sharma, 1991, FT).

Between 1985-1991, NGOs were generally referred to positively in the media. They were viewed as peripheral groups providing humanitarian aid and advocating for human rights and environmental reform. They challenged existing policies, but they were not yet widely viewed as partners in reform the process.

The newspapers reveal that from 1992-1999, NGOs came to be represented as partners, working closely with governmental and international agencies. This also marked the beginning of an NGO move toward a greater role in policymaking in the

provision of aid. For instance, in an article entitled "The U.N. at 50: Facing the Task of Reinventing Itself," in the *New York Times,* "greater representation of nongovernmental organizations" is listed as one of the changes taking place within the United Nations (Crossette, 1995, p. 1). Another article reported that "One reason Western governments have turned to partnerships with nongovernmental organizations is that they are seen to be best placed to facilitate the bottom-up development that is key to reducing poverty" (Turnipseed, 1996, NYT).

These passages reflect the growing influence of NGOs in the regulatory arena, and a switch from NGOs as individual activist organizations to NGOs as a group, as partners. "NGO" was still not a well-known acronym among the general public, however; it would still take time for "NGO" and "nongovernmental organization" to become household names as the identity labels for the industry. For example, in a report on Hillary Clinton's speech at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, William Safire wrote the following:

> Her use of NGO's, an abbreviation, before using the full phrase, "nongovernmental organizations," invited confusion in the minds of the worldwide audience; it's not a good idea to assume everyone knows what the local audience does. There are those for whom NGO stands for Nongovernmental Observers, Naval Gunfire Officer or National Gas Outlet (Safire, 1995, NYT).

Although NGOs were still not a household name, in 1998 the *New York Times* reported a turning point in world polity and the place of NGOs therein:

> To some, the growing role of private companies and nongovernmental organizations, or N.G.O.'s as they are known, in foreign policy marks a jaw-dropping transformation in the world's political structure (Lewis, 1998, NYT).

The following passage evokes the growing awareness of NGO economic and political influence, and also as welling concern about the extent of their involvement. The terms NGO and nongovernmental organization are also emphasized in the previous and following excerpts:

> Their numbers have mushroomed in recent years, their spending has soared, and their political influence is steadily growing. They are the NGOs – non-governmental organisations, a multi-billion dollar industry, on the front line of Africa's many conflicts, and at the heart of the continent's battle for economic recovery.

> Some African governments fear that they are becoming the new colonists of the developing world (Holman, 1999, FT).

Between 2000 and 2007, the newspapers indicate that NGO involvement in world polity reached new heights. Leading functions at key global events, mounting financial resources and economic power, and recognition by business of the global reach of NGO influence all point to a time of transition for the organizations:

> De Beers is not alone in acknowledging the power of the nongovernmental organizations. This year, both the United Nations and the World Economic forum in Davos, Switzerland, recognized the organizations' role, conferring a new legitimacy as many corporations move from confrontation to at least the appearance of cooperation with them (Cowell, 2000, NYT).

> Increasingly, they are operating from the inside by working closely with governments, especially from developing countries, to offer research, public relations resources and even help with the detailed drafting of negotiating proposals (de Jonquieres & Williams, 2001, FT).

The expectations of NGOs were growing, but so too was trepidation as to whether continued aid might be solving short-term problems but creating long-term reliance. NGOs were no longer simply empowered by society and other organizations to fulfill a role in global social welfare, but rather in many cases they were being *expected* to do so.

Meeting such expectations and staying in business in an environment with thousands of NGOs competing for resources resulted in unexpected alliances with business. In 2004, the *Financial Times* quoted the Executive Director of Greenpeace UK as stating the following on the subject of the organization's alliances with Unilever and the electricity company NPower: "We think (alliances) are essential to unlocking progress . . . The more unusual the alliance, the more effective it is likely to be. Greenpeace is interested in who has the power to make change, rather than simply being an outside group and protesting" (Maitland, 2004, p. 7). Alliances between Oxfam and Starbucks, Chiquita and Rainforest Alliance, and Save the Children and Ikea are also mentioned in the article, citing "money, technology and influence" as partnership incentives for the NGOs.

The period 2006-2009 saw a considerable rise in growing suspicion by mainly non-Western governments that the NGO agenda may be politically motivated. Stories on Russia rose substantially in the *New York Times* in 2006 as Putin began to impose more regulations on foreign NGOs. *New York Times* reporters also covered stories in

2006 about negative pressure and/or government restriction on NGO activities in Iran, China, Venezuela, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. Viewing NGOs as political arms of foreign governments began to hinder or halt foreign-funded NGO activities.

Not only were national governments questioning the independence and increasingly *governmental* nature of NGOs, but so too were experts in the field. For instance, in a letter to the editor on 16 June 2006, Richard Walden, then President and Chief Executive of Operation USA, stated that "Reimbursement by government and United Nations agencies has created a contracting – not a charity – mentality among relief agencies" (Walden, 2006, NYT). This example signals a change in reporting on NGOs to an increasing awareness of accountability. For instance, an article in 2006 entitled "Accountability and Ethics: Billions of dollars of aid to Africa has had minimal effect" reported on calls for more NGO and aid organization accountability (Jack, 2006, FT). Another article in 2007 discussed the professionalism and focus on accountability in the aid industry ("Charities look," 2007, FT). The sample shows that most articles from 2000-2007 were about NGOs as experts, partners, or doing good, but it is important to note that accountability and change were also part of the discussion at this time.

In 2008, aid effectiveness became a dominant theme in the NGO discussion. A *Financial Times* story in 2008 entitled "Charity begins in the office" (Murray, 2008) focuses on the issue of efficient aid administration and the use of online systems that simplify reporting for NGOs and allow donors to track the management of resources. The reporting in the *New York Times* on the 2010 earthquake in Haiti also highlights accountability issues and the effectiveness of aid. While former U.S. president Bill Clinton co-authored articles that called on the public, business, and government to donate funds and coordinate efforts (Bellerive & Clinton, 2010; Clinton & Bush, 2010), *New York Times* columnist David Brooks argued that the long-term solution for countries like Haiti should not be continued donor aid. In his words, "we don't know how to use aid to reduce poverty" (Brooks, 2010, p. 27). He acknowledges the efforts of the relief workers, but indicates that empowering local leaders to enact change is the only long-term solution in a country that has received millions of dollars in aid and "has more nongovernmental organizations per capita than any other place on earth," yet still lacks the infrastructure and services to govern independently (p. 27).

The articles in the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times* from 1985-2010 suggest a changing landscape between sectors, as well as public concern regarding NGO practices and the provision of aid. The change in NGO frames from protectors to partners to policymakers was fairly straightforward in the newspaper accounts. The focus on aid effectiveness beginning in 2008 suggests a dominant view of NGOs as aid providers, with a particular emphasis on the efficacy of that provision.

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to determine when NGOs acquired taken-for-granted legitimacy and how this was reflected in the media. To that end, a longitudinal study of media coverage of nongovernmental organizations was conducted and the implications of this coverage on organizational legitimacy were analyzed. The findings show the importance of categories and labels to organizational identity formation and sector legitimacy (Hsu & Hannan, 2005). A framing approach to media coverage of nongovernmental organizations revealed changes in the public understanding of NGOs, and thus changes in the general culture as well (Van Gorp, 2007). This paper contributes to the literature on nongovernmental organizations by showing when the public became aware of the organizations as a sector, the importance of "nongovernmental organization" as an identifying label, and changes in the way NGOs have been discussed in newspapers over time. The study resulted in a number of findings about nongovernmental organizations that to our knowledge have not been previously reported.

First, the evidence shows that the use of the term nongovernmental organization became more popular in the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times* in the 1990s. Though its definition has been a source of contention in the literature, "nongovernmental organization" appears to be the category with the most cognitive staying power. While other terms are being used in the media and elsewhere, nongovernmental organization still seems to be the preferred nomenclature to describe the sector and the entities in the sector.

Second, the statistical analysis showed a linear trend in the number of articles that mention NGOs in both the *Financial Times* and *New York Times*. We can thus infer that given that the media serve to disseminate information (Hannan et al., 1995), NGO legitimacy as an organizational form did not occur in a vacuum. Although the newspapers cover two different institutional contexts – the US and Europe – increased legitimation appears to have occurred simultaneously which we can see in the jump in activity in both newspapers in the early 1990s. The institutional contexts do appear to play a role in the number of articles each paper devoted to the subject; there were considerably more mentions in the *Financial Times* than the *New York Times* from the 1990s until 2011 (the difference was not significant during the period 1980-1989). This difference might be explained by "an institutional setting more receptive to arguments and tactics of non-governmental advocacy" in the European Union (Doh & Guay, 2006, p. 66), but additional research would need to be conducted to determine this conclusively.

Third, we found that while NGOs had been operating for decades and had been formally recognized by the UN since 1945, cognitive symbols – "words, signs, and gestures" (Hoffman, 1999, p. 353) – related to this organizational form began to

develop and flourish in the 1990s. Scholars refer to the 1990s as the NGO "heyday" or "revolution" despite the fact that the largest jump in the number of these organizations occurred a decade earlier. An increase in organizational density alone can thus not explain the increase in cognitive legitimacy (McKendrick et al., 2003). Only when relief, humanitarian, and advocacy organizations were categorized and came to be known by the general public as "nongovernmental organizations," did NGOs begin to achieve taken-for-grantedness *as a sector.* Embeddedness of the term in the media was critical to this process (Kennedy, 2008). The power and influence that NGOs know today can in part be attributed to the collective identity that was established in the 1990s, with the tipping point occurring around 1996. Increased recognition by the United Nations in formal declarations, a changing NGO-media relationship, NGO partnership and collaboration, and the rise of the use of "nongovernmental organization" in print media helped to create and propagate the cognitive legitimacy of the sector. The establishment of a distinct category served to propel cognitive recognition and thus increase the legitimacy of the organizations (McKendrick & Carroll, 2001).

Fourth, nongovernmental organizations were primarily represented as "doing good" in the *Financial Times* and *New York Times* from 1985-2010. In his study of U.S. nonprofit organizations, Hale (2007) also found that media coverage of nonprofits was generally positive. Given that positive coverage is an indicator of legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996) and that legitimacy is linked to resource attainment (Suchman, 1995), media representation remains consequential to the organizations.

Fifth, media framing has played an important role in the legitimacy process of NGOs. Topic selection in the newspapers leads to greater cognition, and semantic categories reflect normative judgments (Humphreys, 2010). At the same time, what gets printed may also have to conform to the values of the publication (Carvalho & Burgess, 2005). If specific labels are selected over others, public understanding can be influenced over time. The findings show that although the category "nongovernmental organization" has remained the same, our understanding of these organizations has changed and this change can be detected through frame analysis of newspaper articles (Pollock & Rindova, 2003). For example, Agg (2006) indicated that the "golden age" of the NGO may be over. It is no coincidence that at the time of Agg's study, NGO accountability and effectiveness began to enter the main discourse. However, it should be noted that the findings regarding the Provider frame were mixed. When all articles during this period were considered, many examples of accountability and aid effectiveness were found. The sample did not, however, turn up as many articles in this frame as had been expected. As indicated above, this may be attributable to the fact that the study ended in 2010 and thus resulted in a frame of only three years. It is expected that the Provider frame - and focus on aid effectiveness - continued beyond that time, but further analysis would be necessary to confirm this.

Finally, during the early 1990s and middle 2000s, the term nongovernmental organization helped to identify these organizations as a unified group, and that term stood for partner and policymaker. The end of the golden age signaled a focus on NGO efficaciousness as providers of aid. While NGOs are still partnering with business and government and are involved in policy development, their status has not been able to protect them from public scrutiny in the age of accountability. A combination of institutional and discursive factors resulted in changes in the way NGOs were framed in the newspapers, from protector to partner to policymaker to aid provider. Media attention alone does not determine legitimacy, but it contributes to the legitimacy process by embedding meaning through categories and understanding through frames.

The implication for NGOs of the findings presented here is that not only media attention to individual organizations is important to organizational legitimacy, but also the way that the sector is framed as a whole can impact legitimacy and therefore access to resources. How the organizations – as an industry or as smaller groups of networked organizations – strategically approach the current dominant frame of aid effectiveness could significantly impact both the legitimacy and identity of the sector.

The 1990s marked the beginning of taken-for-granted legitimation of nongovernmental organizations as a sector. The current aid effectiveness discourse reflects growing concerns about accountability as well as an environment in which competition for funds requires organizations to meet donor demands and show their performance outputs. Some praise these developments and increased cooperation with business (e.g., Yaziji & Doh, 2009), while others indicate that donor-driven activity and a focus on measurements undermine the purpose of the sector (e.g, Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015). Sometimes maintaining legitimacy with one stakeholder may mean a loss of legitimacy with another. For instance, implementing donor performance and accountability procedures may serve to maintain legitimacy with donors, but it may decrease legitimacy with constituents or the general public who may view such cooperation as compromising the organization's integrity and independence. However, not implementing such procedures could lead to a loss of funding that is critical to organization survival. This Catch-22 could affect NGO identity in that organizations similar to one another may choose to splinter off and seek a new category or label that better represents them and the interests of their stakeholders, and distances them from threats to their legitimacy.

With regard to limitations of this study, an increase in cognitive legitimacy was analyzed using two Western newspapers. Although the *New York Times* and *Financial Times* are considered agenda-setting publications, generalizability could be improved through the use of more newspapers or media outlets. This study is a first step in an attempt to provide evidence concerning the statistical properties of a time series of newspaper articles dealing with NGOs that may be susceptible to systematic

interpretation. Our econometric models provide a basic understanding of the movement of published newspaper articles. Future studies can develop a range of additional models that provide further understanding of the growth pattern in media attention.

Another limitation of the study was the relatively small sample size of coded articles. Although the sample was large enough to be 95% representative of the data population (Neuendorf, 2002), a larger sample might show the patterns more distinctly. The coding scheme was also rather cumbersome to work with; future studies might modify or simplify the scheme to make it an easier tool with which to work. Additionally, the study does not provide causal evidence for the peak of coverage in the middle 2000s; whether events such as the 2004 tsunami across Indonesia or Hurricane Katrina and the Kyoto Protocol in 2005 resulted in peaks in news coverage attention cycles (Holt & Barkemeyer, 2010) might be a topic for future research.

The research presented here focuses on NGOs as a sector, but another study might analyze specific NGOs to gain more perspective on the legitimation process from a *within* the organization. Finally, the subject of legitimacy here also opens the door to a discursive discussion concerning NGO institutional evolution and change.

Appendix 1: Newspaper Article References

Financial Times

Ahmed, R., and Sharma, K. K. (1991, May 9). "Bangladesh cyclone relief effort delayed by snags." Financial Times, Overseas News, p. 4.

"Charities look to businesses: NGO evolution." (2007, July 5). Financial Times, FT Report, p. 4.

Holman, M. (1999, August 19). "The 'fireman' flourish in the heat of Africa: NGOs flourish in disaster areas, but some are questioning their influence." Financial Times, International, p. 4.

Jack, A. (2006, November 16). "Accountability and Ethics: Billions of dollars of aid to Africa has had minimal effect." Financial Times, FT Report, p. 4.

Jonquieres de, G., and Williams, F. (2001, November 12). "Global activists adopt new tactics: Switch to behind the scenes influence." Financial Times, World News, p. 10.

Maitland, A. (2004, December 24). "Old foes share common ground." Financial Times, Business Life, p. 7.

Murray, S. (2008, November 11). "Charity begins in the office." Financial Times, Wealth, p. 8.

New York Times

Bellerive, J. and Clinton, B. (2010, July 12). "Finishing Haiti's unfinished work." New York Times, p. A19.

Brooks, D. (2010, January 15). "The underlying tragedy." New York Times, p. A27.

Clinton, B., and Bush, G. W. (2010, January 17). "A helping hand for Haiti." New York Times, p. WK10.

Cowell, A. (2000, December 18). "Advocates gain ground in a globalized era." New York Times, p. C19.

Crossette, B. (1991, August 6). "Village committees learn to guard endangered forest in Bangladesh." New York Times, p. C4.

Crossette, B. (1995, October 22). "The U.N. at 50: Facing the task of reinventing itself." New York Times, Sect. 1, p. 1.

Lewis, P. (1998, November 28). "Not just governments make war or peace." New York Times, p. B9.

Safire, W. (1995, October 1). "Hillary Speaks." New York Times, Sect. 6, p. 28.

Turnipseed, R. L. (1996, April 16). "Foreign aid makes a visible difference." New York Times, p. A20.

Walden, R. M. (2006, June 16). "So how much help is foreign aid?" New York Times, p. A30.

Appendix 2: Coding Guidelines and Examples

Coding Guidelines

The guidelines below were followed by the first author and the independent coder.

1) Determining the frame: Do Good, Protest, Partner, Public Accountability, Expert, Government Resistance, Other*

a) Do Good: Describes the useful work NGOs are doing; positive statements about NGOs
b) Protest: NGO activity is mainly described in the article as speaking out -- in the form of making an issue public, lobbying, legal action -- about unethical, harmful, irresponsible, illegal, and/or threatening practices on the part of government or business.
c) Partner: Collaboration with government, business, or other organizations is highlighted
d) Public Accountability/Credibility: "NGOs are criticized for corruption, lack of accountability, hidden agendas, and bad management skills" (de Souza, 2010, p. 487). Articles in which NGO credibility, effectiveness, or purpose is questioned by constituency other than government (by journalist, expert, citizen, etc.)
e) Expert: Is the NGO or NGO representative being quoted as an expert on the subject? (This category was not part of De Souza's research.)
f) Government Resistance: Government against or negative toward NGO involvement (This category was not part of De Souza's research.)
g) Other: Does not meet any of the above

Coding Examples

Financial Times

Date	LexisNexis Article #	Headline	Section	# Words	Author
22 Oct 1994	42	More heat than light in Nepal over power wrangle	p. 3	870	F. Gray
26 June 2003	136	Accountability 'vital' if NGOs are to retain trust	Asia-Pacific	328	A. Maitland
3 Oct 2006	91	Air deal founders on US bid to keep clients' data	International Economy, p. 10	391	A. Bounds, D. Cameron, H. Williamson

New York Times

Date	LexisNexis Article #	Headline	Section	# Words	Author
5 June 1989	16	Kampala Journal; When the trouble is men, women help women	Sect. A, p. 4, col. 3, Foreign Desk	1000	J. Perlez
2 Dec 1994	5	Paris meeting backs UN program to combat AIDS	Sect. A, p. 12, col. 1, Foreign Desk	626	A. Riding
31 March 2009	80	Obama urges Sudan to allow aid groups back into the country	Sect. A, p. 12, col. 0, Foreign Desk	413	P. Baker

* Public Accountability

** Government Resistance

Do Good	Protest	Partner	Public Acct.*	Expert	Govt. Resist.**	Other	Excerpt from text
	x						The government scheme is being strenuously opposed by such non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as the US-based Environmental Defence Fund…
			x				International non-governmental organisations must practise what they preach and become more accountable…
				x			"Any individual could challenge this and ask the US how data has been used," said Tony Bunyan, editor of Statewatch, a UK nongovernmental organization that monitors civil liberties.

Do Good	Protest	Partner	Public Acct.*	Expert	Govt. Resist.**	Other	Excerpt from text
x							There is a lively non-governmental organization, recently started by women, to help the country's countless children orphaned by either the civil war or the AIDS epidemic.
		x					We're talking about a whole new partnership with non-governmental organizations and with people with AIDS.
					x		Bashir responded by expelling 13 nongovernmental organizations

Chapter 3

What's in a theme? The language of business in nonprofit organization research, 1990-2010

An adapted version of this chapter is in the second round of review for publication in a peer-reviewed social issues journal.

Abstract

This study examines 1418 articles in three leading journals in the field of nonprofit organization studies from 1990-2010. Using topic modeling to detect dominant themes, it traces the development of the academic research on nonprofit organizations over a period of two decades. The findings indicate that the research on nonprofit organizations has increasingly adopted the language of business. The shift in the academic lexicon toward one with a managerialist vocabulary points toward isomorphism and a change in focus that mirrors that of government and business. This is significant given the potential of the research discourse to influence developments in the nonprofit sector.

Introduction

The professionalization of the nonprofit sector has been particularly noticeable within the fields in which nonprofit activity has traditionally been dominant such as social services, health, and education (Hwang & Powell, 2009). The tensions between voluntarism, civic activism, commercialism, and professionalism reflect the push and pull of stakeholders and market forces (Salamon, 2012). The professionalization debate also involves nonprofit organizations (NPOs) adopting the nomenclature of for-profit organizations and their focus on "speed, growth, numbers, and material success" (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015, p. 713). Although existing studies provide valuable insights into professionalization in various nonprofit fields (see Maier, Meyer, & Steinbereithner, 2016, for a literature review), there has been little research with a focus on language (Korff, Oberg, & Powell, 2015; Laasonen, Fougère, & Kourula, 2012; Oakes, Townley, & Cooper, 1998) and the vocabulary used by scholars in their studies of these fields.

Given that academia is one of the arenas in which the debate on the professionalization of NPOs debate is taking place, this study would like to investigate to what extent the academic research on NPOs incorporates the language of business into its nomenclature. The use of business terminology is one indicator of higher education speaking in terms that its funders in government and industry understand. Appropriating the wrong language can be risky: "Different vocabularies undermine the actors in a field and their degree of competence" (Oakes et al., 1998, p. 272). The use of "proper" terminology by researchers in their study of NPOs may be important to the researcher, his/her employer the organization under study, and the sector as such use fosters legitimacy. An important reason for individuals and organizations to adopt the language and structures of other individuals and organizations is to improve access to resources, political power, and legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This process is known as isomorphism.

Previous studies have identified themes in NPO literature (e.g., Anheier, 1990; Brudney & Durdon, 1993), analyzed isomorphism among NPOs (e.g., Claeyé & Jackson, 2012; Verbruggen, Christiaens, & Milis, 2011), reviewed the academic literature on NPOs becoming more business-like (Maier et al., 2016), and discussed changing NPO discourse (e.g., Eikenberry, 2009; Korff et al., 2015; Laasonen et al., 2012). This exploratory research addresses concepts investigated in these studies, and illustrates the suitability of topic modeling for the analysis of the academic literature on NPOs.

Maier et al. (2016) hold that the main task of nonprofit management studies is to determine whether NPOs can and should employ business-like approaches in their work. Their comprehensive literature review of academic research focusing on NPOs becoming more business-like found that the research points to both positive and

negative effects. They focus on the NPOs, and this study will focus on the academic discourse in the research on NPOs.

Discourses contain structural features, such as themes, metaphors, and rhetorical strategies that are implicit, persistent, and prevalent within a particular literature over time (Heracleous & Hendry, 2000). The research here focuses on one of those structural features – themes – and what theme development reveals about the way NPOs are discussed and described in the academic literature. More concretely, it seeks to answer the following question: How is the adoption of the language of business expressed through themes in the academic research on nonprofit organizations?

One contribution of this study is that it uses topic modeling to identify the themes and business language in the academic literature. Topic modeling enables us to extract topics from literature texts. The authors are not aware of any other studies in the NPO or management literature that have used such procedures for theme detection. Another contribution of the study is its use of research themes to operationalize the appropriation of business language by scholars in studies on NPOs.

The study will first discuss and elaborate on isomorphism, the language of business, and the use of themes in research. Next, it will describe how the themes detected in three leading journals on NPOs – *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (*NVSQ*), *Nonprofit Management & Leadership* (*NML*), and *Voluntas* - are an expression of dominant discourses over time. The methodology for theme identification will then be outlined, examples from *NVSQ, NML, and Voluntas* will be provided, and the results will be presented. Finally, the contributions and limitations of the research will be examined, and the study will conclude with a discussion of potential research directions and some final remarks.

Isomorphism

Legitimacy refers to the perception by stakeholders or the public that an organization's activities are appropriate according to current social norms and values (Suchman, 1995). This perception is critical to securing resources for organizational survival (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Parsons, 1956). To quote Parsons (1956), "the conduct of the affairs of an organization must in general conform with the norms of 'good conduct' as recognized and institutionalized in the society" (p. 84). Part of conforming with these norms is incorporating "the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society" in order to increase legitimacy and chances of survival (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 340).

Adopting the conduct of other organizations in the pursuit of legitimacy is termed isomorphism and can take place coercively, mimetically, or normatively (DiMaggio &

Powell, 1983). Coercive isomorphism results when one organization is pressured by another organization that it depends on for funding or support; mimetic isomorphism occurs when an organization takes on the characteristics of another organization as a way of dealing with uncertainty; and normative isomorphism hinges on the establishment and proliferation of normative rules through formal education and professional networks. Use of the correct language can be viewed as one of these rules. Having a command of the appropriate organizational vocabulary is expected of the participants in a field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

The use of accepted terminology can be both legitimating and empowering. Meyer and Rowen (1977) argue that language is a key element in the process of isomorphism as "affixing the right labels to activities can change them into valuable services and mobilize the commitments of internal participants and external constituents" (p. 350). Thus, the words we use to communicate about – and the labels we affix to - organizations and their functions are not simply a matter of description; they can also impact organizational legitimacy and success. In their study of Canadian museums and heritage sites, Oakes et al. (1998), report that when the organizations were required by the provincial government to produce business plans, the adoption of the business vocabulary was a critical step in the process of isomorphism, and thus the professionalization of the sector, that ultimately changed the focus of the organizations from social capital to economic capital. The term professionalization as used by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Hwang and Powell (2009) refers to an increase in paid staff, higher education programs, and professional training and networks. This differs from Banks et al. (2015) who describe *professional* nonprofits as those that "master the donors' terminology and ways of working, and who can satisfy strict accounting processes to governments" (p. 709). The former focuses on the processes while the latter focuses on the outcomes. Sandberg (2012) argues that in the United States, professionalization of the NPO sector can be explained as a transition from charity to philanthropy where philanthropy is defined as a program of government that serves to perpetuate the neoliberal discourse. In this view, the adoption of certain practices not only improves chances of organizational survival but also aids in reinforcing a system of governing.

Reliance on funding from government and donors makes NPOs more susceptible to isomorphic pressures (Claeyé and Jackson, 2012; Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004; Verbruggen et al., 2011). Utilizing a discourse-in-practice approach, Claeyé and Jackson (2012, p. 617) found that isomorphic pressures led to "mimicking and internalizing the managerialist discourse emanating from the global governance structure of international aid and are becoming more business-like" by NPO managers. However, it should be noted that their research also pointed to a hybrid situation representing a combination of managerialist and humanist discourses.

According to Frumkin and Galaskiewicz (2004), isomorphic pressures are not limited to for-profit and nonprofit organizations. The authors claim that in fact public sector or government organizations - for example, educational institutions - are more affected by coercive, normative, and mimetic pressures than their for-profit or nonprofit counterparts. The researchers explain that coercive and normative forces drove government organizations to become more like for-profits and nonprofits in a process that "influences homogenized organizational structures across the entire organizational population" (Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004, p. 303). While Frumkin and Galaskiewicz refer to structures - such as centralized and formal - rather than language, language is a critical element in the adoption of new organizational structures (Oakes et al., 1998; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Changing structures in an organizational context thus necessarily involves the adoption of new labels and vocabulary.

The Language of Business

In order to determine whether scholars have adopted the language of business in their research of NPOs, we first have to identify what this language is. In this research, the language of business refers to terms associated with new public management (NPM), and indicates a focus on standards and performance measures, results, efficiency, competition, and private sector management tools (Hood, 1991).

Hood (1991) states that the ideas behind the NPM movement became pervasive in the 1980s. He describes NPM as a combination of new institutional economics which included concepts such as transparency and incentive structures, and the international scientific management movement which focused on professional management, active measurement, and outputs. The emphasis here is not on how or why NPM found favor in public administration, but rather the language that is associated with NPM.

Prior to NPM, the language of NPOs was "organized around an interconnected nest of prosocial and voluntaristic values and goals with few references to the means and structures by which these values are enacted" (Dart, 2004, p. 294). Becoming more business-like suggests greater emphasis on structure, economy, effectiveness, strategic expansion, technological know-how, and creating leaner organizations (Alexander, 2000). Specific terminology might include accountability, transparency, strategic planning and project evaluation (Roberts, Jones, & Fröhling, 2005); performance, outcomes, efficiency (Korff et al., 2015); market analysis, core competence, profit and revenue generation, high-volume service delivery, results-oriented, doing well versus doing good, short-term vs. long-term outlook, specialist versus generalist focus on aid provision (Dart, 2004); and capacity, entrepreneurial, planning, resource

development, and effectiveness (Bishop, 2007). These examples do not comprise an exhaustive list of the language of business, but together they point to a tendency toward a focus on performance, measurable outcomes, accountability, and the use of private-sector management tools to structure activity, develop strategy, and improve efficiency and effectiveness. Together these words become "a carrier of a shared understanding in the creation and maintenance of organizational structures" (Heracleous & Hendry, 2000, p. 1252).

Thematically categorizing the words and terminology researchers used in their studies of NPOs over time may reveal a particular focus, emphasis, or shared understanding. Below a definition of theme is provided as well as an elaboration on the use of themes in research.

Themes

A theme is a "postulate or position, declared or implied, and usually controlling behavior or stimulating activity, which is tacitly approved or openly promoted in a society" (Opler, 1945, p. 198). In social science, themes have been termed categories, codes, and labels (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Agar (1979) recognizes themes as "beliefs, values, or rules of behavior" (p.13). Karsdorp and Van den Bosch (2013) use the term motifs in their research on folktales. Ryan and Bernard (2003) state that themes have also been referred to as motifs, categories, codes, and labels. Regardless of the terminology used, the scientists above all seek to answer the question "What is this expression an example of?" (Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 87). Here an expression might be a text, an image, or an object. Identifying themes from these expressions provides insight into our cultural heritage (Karsdorp & Van den Bosch, 2013) as well as into emerging issues (Griffith, Cavusgil, & Xu, 2008) and research opportunities (Chatha & Butt, 2015).

Themes are useful in research because they serve as indicators *and* information: indicators of what is being talked about and information concerning how these topics are being talked about (Agar, 1979). Thus, themes can both reflect and steer the discussion of a particular subject; studying them can inform us about the past, present, and future of a particular culture or cultural development, and as such they guide our research (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The study of themes is not only relevant to research in anthropology and sociology, but to business as well. Griffith et al. (2008) investigate which themes were prevalent in the international business literature from 1996-2006 and which ones appear to be emerging. Similarly, Radziwill (2013) identified the themes in the *Quality Management Journal* (*QMJ*) from 1993-2008 to determine whether *QMJ* had met its goals as a journal, and also to provide suggestions for future research in the field. In

their study of manufacturing strategy, Chatha and Butt (2015) used thematic development to uncover research gaps, to identify trends, and to highlight methodologies used in various research papers.

Regardless of the discipline, theme identification reflects societal values, and theme analysis reveals structure in the balance of these themes (Opler, 1945). When societal themes are balanced, the result is a state of equilibrium. When one theme dominates, the outcome may be a dramatic change to the structure or an "equilibrium in flux" (Opler, 1945, p. 205). One way to deal with "disruptions" is to make sense of them through communication: "Situations, organizations, and environments are talked into existence" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409). Language is thus a powerful response to - and an important source of - change.

The following sections explain how the thematic analysis of the academic literature on NPOs was carried out, and present the results and implications of the analysis.

Methods

Given the power of themes to indicate and inform the values and beliefs of a society, we have a genuine interest in trying to identify them. A number of techniques can be used for theme identification, depending on the type of research: repetitions, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data, theory-related material, cutting and sorting, word lists and key words in context, word co-occurrence, and metacoding (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Other investigators have discovered themes by applying different techniques to those listed above. For example, Radziwill (2013) employs citation network analysis, text mining, association analysis, and clustering. Griffith et al. (2008) rely on citation analysis and a Delphi analysis for theme discovery. Hence, there is not a once-size-fits-all approach to theme identification. Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest that different techniques can produce different themes but that this can be a benefit to the research rather than a drawback. The key issue, the authors claim, is being explicit about methods used and judgments made. One of the questions that Ryan and Bernard (2003) pose concerning future research in theme identification is "To what extent can we develop automated procedures for finding themes?" (p. 105). This research hopes to respond to that question below by showing how software technology can be employed to discover themes in large bodies of text regarding research into NPOs.

The empirical research in this paper centered on identifying the themes used to describe NPOs from 1990-2010 in three academic journals: *Voluntas, Nonprofit Management & Leadership* (*NML*), and *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (*NVSQ*). These publications are top tier, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journals

dedicated to nonprofit research and management that have been in publication since at least 1990. Other studies such as Maier et al. (2016) have also identified these journals as leading journals for nonprofit studies. The research here covers two decades of articles. The year 1990 was selected as a starting point for the research because the 1990s marked the beginning of greater nonprofit and nongovernmental organization activity and participation globally (Marberg, van Kranenburg, & Korzilius, 2016; Charnovits, 1997; Salamon, 1994). Because greater participation and increased globalization might result in a significant change in research agenda and terminology, only articles written in or after 1990 were included.

In total, the title and abstract of 1418 documents were analyzed: 624 from *NVSQ*, 378 from *Voluntas*, and 416 from *NML*. The difference in the number of documents per publication can be attributed to publication frequency and additional supplements. The documents were analyzed as one database and not as separate publications because the goal was to determine thematic development in the field as a whole and not to compare individual journals.

As part of the analysis, topic modeling was employed to extract topics from texts. Simply stated, topic models are probabilistic models that reveal relationships between words and documents within a corpus. Blei and Lafferty (2009) succinctly express the utility of topic modeling in research: "By discovering patterns of word use and connecting documents that exhibit similar patterns, topic models have emerged as a powerful new technique for finding useful structure in an otherwise unstructured collection" (p. 71). Topic modeling has been found to be especially effective in analyzing large document collections (Karsdorp & Van den Bosch, 2013; Rubin, Chambers, Smyth, & Steyvers, 2012; Yao, Mimno, & McCallum, 2009). In their own example, Blei and Lafferty (2009) analyze the JSTOR archive of *Science* from 1980-2002. The authors use a specific type of model called latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) to identify the key words and topics associated with each year in the journals. Blei, Ng, and Jordan (2003) define LDA as "a generative probabilistic model of a corpus. The basic idea is that documents are represented as random mixtures over latent topics, where each topic is characterized by a distribution over words" (p. 996). Another explanation of LDA is that it identifies sets of words which "tend to reflect underlying topics that, in combination, characterize every document in a corpus" (McFarland, Ramage, Chuang, Heer, Manning, & Jurafsky, 2013, p. 610). The Stanford Topic Modeling Toolbox (Stanford TMT) version 0.4.0 was used to perform the LDA. The Stanford TMT allowed us to generate the top terms per topic within a given time frame, providing a view of the evolution of topics. We chose the Stanford tool after reading about its applicability (e.g., Ramage, Rosen, Chuang, Manning, & McFarland, 2009), its reputation as user-friendly software, because it was designed for social scientists rather than engineers, and because it is Excel-compatible, facilitating data analysis.

One of the advantages of using an automated system to detect topics is that we reduce the risk of finding what we are "consciously or unconsciously looking for" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 259), which Matthes and Kohring (2008) argue has been a pitfall in many framing studies in which authors do not explain explicitly how their frames were identified. Although frames and themes are not synonymous, the concerns regarding identification are similar. Matthes and Kohring also maintain that reliability is an issue because frame identification is coder-specific. LDA resolves some of these concerns by removing the researcher from the identification process. However, LDA still involves researcher input. McFarland et al. (2013) indicate that expert validation, or *ground truth*, of the topics can be an important part of the process to control for data errors, remove unrecognizable clusters, and assign names.

Using LDA to study a corpus about NPOs over three decades allows us to identify a thematic structure of research of the field, thus providing insight into beliefs, values, and what is considered appropriate and legitimate. Analysis of the subjects that the researchers consider important to study and analyze tells us not only about how the research on NPOs has evolved, but it also speaks what subjects academia finds legitimate and legitimating. In order to empirically substantiate and validate the labeling of the themes, tf-idf was used as corroborating analysis. This is described below.

Results

The Stanford TMT derived 30 topics of 20 words each from the corpus of 1418 documents from 1990-2010. (See Figure 1 for the distribution of the journal articles.) The first researcher reviewed and named the topics. The other two researchers also reviewed the topics and the names provided by the first researcher. Agreement was reached as to the final names after agreement based on consensus. It is worth noting that only two of the topic names or labels were further specified but otherwise not dramatically revised. The top two topics for each year were documented, along with the corresponding terms for those topics. The topics and terms were then analyzed by the first researcher to determine whether or not there was a discernable structure or pattern to the topic distribution over time. Based on the topic distribution produced by LDA, the first researcher was able to group years together and identify a clear pattern of change in topical cohesion from 1990-2010. Topic modeling often reveals "distinct periods of topical cohesion" (Anderson, McFarland, & Jurafsky, 2012, p. 2). When an academic journal corpus is the subject of study, such topical cohesion reflects a particular research agenda at the time.

Figure 1 Distribution of journal articles in *Nonprofit Voluntary Quarterly*, *Voluntas*, *Nonprofit Management & Leadership.*

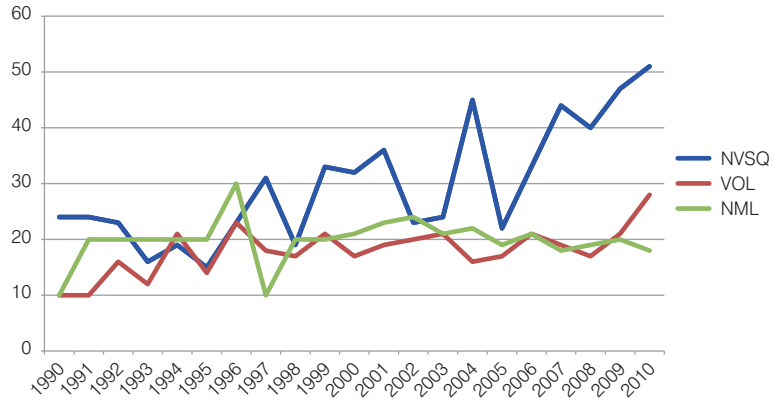


Table 1 provides an example of two topics produced by the Stanford tool and the words that make up those topics. The numbers after the words indicate the weight or relevance of the word for that topic. For instance, the word "society" is the most relevant word for topic "global civil society." Table 2 gives an overview of the 30 topics assigned to each year by the Stanford tool. The researchers provided names or labels for each topic based on the word-sets as part of the ground truth process.

The Stanford TMT results were tested using term frequency and inverse document frequency (tf-idf). Tf-idf is a fairly simple statistical measure that shows the importance of a word to a document in a corpus, and is a useful method for comparison here (Karsdorp & Van den Bosch, 2013). Term frequency is multiplied by inverse document frequency, and the result is a weight for each word. The higher the weight, the more relevant the word (Zhang, Yoshida, & Tang, 2011).

One member of the research team analyzed the LDA and tf-idf-produced results for each year and then categorized the years thematically based on the terms assigned. Independent of the first researcher, another member on the team performed the same thematic categorization. The researchers compared their results, and were in agreement on all years except 2006 (96.6% agreement), for which neither researcher was able to discern a clear topic for the year on its own. When 2006 was considered with the years prior and after, the researchers were able to provide a context for that year and were in agreement on the final outcome.

Table 1 Example of Stanford Topic Modeling Tool Topic Distributions
Sample Topics: 01 and 11

Topic 01: Global Civil Society	Weight	**Topic 11: NGO International Strategies**	Weight
society	179.48	ngos	188.94
civil	139.88	ngo	62.94
global	76.01	nongovernmental	43.42
international	41.69	international	36.62
movement	30.51	strategies	34.42
world	29.53	ireland	19.85
democratic	28.47	projects	19.60
democracy	25.86	advocacy	19.39
movements	20.95	northern	15.64
economic	20.26	network	14.97
growth	20.24	case	14.28
nongovernmental	15.83	poor	14.11
policy	14.54	challenges	13.80
concept	13.80	philanthropy	13.39
actors	12.51	non-governmental	12.93
rights	12.47	meaning	12.76
place	12.39	china	12.73
war	11.70	examines	11.85
emerged	11.63	peace	11.71
south	11.51	building	11.67

Table 3 contains a list of the dominant two topics for each year from 1990-2010. The number not in parentheses represents the number of the topic produced by the Stanford tool. The number in parentheses represents the weight of that topic compared to all other topics for that year. The topic with the highest weight in a particular year is listed first. The topic with the next highest weight is listed second. (The tool assigns a weight to each topic for each year.) For example, in 1990 the most dominant topic was topic number 21 to which the label "NPO Geographic Scope" was assigned. The second most dominant topic was topic number 7 which we called "Healthcare."

Table 2 The 30 Topics.

Topic Number	Topic Label Assigned
01	Global Civil Society*
02	Volunteerism
03	NPO Programs, Staff, & Management
04	Funding & Tax
05	Accountability & Management
06	Volunteer/Employee Motivation & Satisfaction
07	Healthcare
08	Corporate Philanthropy
09	Mission & Strategy
10	Inter-organizational Collaboration
11	NGO International Strategies*
12	Executive Management
13	Future of Agency Funding
14	U.S. National Nonprofits
15	Effectiveness & Accountability
16	Faith-based Organizations
17	Associations, Members, & Participation
18	Economic Theories & Perspectives
19	Financial Performance
20	Religious Capital Ties
21	NPO Geographic Scope
22	Forms of Civic Institutions
23	Strategic Resource Planning
24	Manager Behavior**
25	NPO Leadership**
26	Women & NPOs
27	Local Program Change
28	Theoretical Understanding of NPOs
29	NPO Education Programs
30	Governance, Policy, & Leadership

* The topic model distributions for Topics 1 and 11 are listed in Table 1 to provide an example of how the topic labels were assigned.

** As a matter of clarification, "Manager Behavior" topic contained words such as "model, managers, behavior, assumptions, quality, potential, approach, level, techniques." NPO Leadership contained words such as "leadership, process, interviews, case, environment, goals, leaders, aids, changes."

Table 3 First and Second Topics Identified by the Stanford Topic Modeling Tool.
Labels provided by the researchers. Topic weight in parentheses.

Themes	Year	1st Topic	Topic Label	2nd Topic	Topic Label
Purpose, Doing Good, Change	1990	21 (176)	NPO Geographic Scope	7 (164)	Healthcare
	1991	7 (155)	Healthcare	4 (155)	Funding & Tax
	1992	30 (241)	Governance, Policy, & Leadership	12 (201)	Executive Management
	1993	23 (152)	Strategic Resource Planning	18 (149)	Economic Theories & Perspectives
	1994	4 (259)	Funding & Tax	13 (256)	Future of Agency Funding
Effectiveness & Accountability	1995	15 (304)	Effectiveness & Accountability	21 (202)	NPO Geographic Scope
	1996	26 (278)	Women & NPOs	6 (207)	Volunteer/Employee Motivation & Satisfaction
	1997	15 (215)	Effectiveness & Accountability	21 (202)	NPO Geographic Scope
	1998	18 (282)	Economic Theories & Perspectives	8 (151)	Corporate Philanthropy
Management & Globalization	1999	11 (463)	NGO International Strategies	1 (251)	Global Civil Society
	2000	28 (252)	Theoretical Understanding of NPOs	7 (242)	Healthcare
	2001	11 (238)	NGO International Strategies	2 (225)	Volunteerism
	2002	11 (309)	NGO International Strategies	1 (215)	Global Civil Society
	2003	5 (353)	Accountability & Management	19 (262)	Financial Performance
	2004	22 (364)	Forms of Civic Institutions	28 (260)	Theoretical Understanding of NPOs
	2005	6 (271)	Volunteer/Employee Motivation & Satisfaction	15 (178)	Effectiveness & Accountability
	2006	1 (422)	Global Civil Society	14 (339)	U.S. National Nonprofits
Education, Becoming More Like Business	2007	29 (378)	NPO Education Programs	6 (324)	Volunteer/Employee Motivation & Satisfaction
	2008	2 (275)	Volunteerism	23 (228)	Strategic Resource Planning
	2009	2 (350)	Volunteerism	30 (317)	Governance, Policy & Leadership
Strategy & Regulation	2010	11 (395)	NGO International Strategies	3 (349)	NPO Programs, Staff, & Management

The next section discusses the themes that were assigned to each period based on the topics generated through LDA - and corroborated by tf-idf - and provides examples of articles from the journals that are expressions of those themes.

The Themes: 1990-2010

The following section offers a description of the themes that were determined using topic modeling. These descriptions are followed by expressions of the themes in the form of academic journal articles. As explained above, topics were derived from the three academic journals using LDA. From these topics, we were able to identify patterns - or themes - in the texts over time. Some themes overlap in various years, but the patterns were distinct enough to reveal five thematic periods of communication about NPOs. It should be noted that the examples below were not selected at random and are not part of the methodology concerning theme selection. Rather, they have been included to provide examples of the types of expressions that collectively form the theme for each time period, and as such serve as rich illustrations of the themes (Ploeg, 1999).

1990-1994: Establishing Purpose, Doing Good, Change

Much of the research during this period was devoted to establishing what nonprofit organizations are, what they do, how to best study them, and the changing relationships between private/government/and nonprofit sectors. The overriding tone is that nonprofit, voluntary, and nongovernmental organizations are providing a positive service to society. There are numerous examples of doing good, changing relationships, and historical comparisons. In the December 1993 issue of *Voluntas*, three of the articles analyze historical data to explain how the organizations differ or change over time, whether existing theory can explain events, and what the future research trends might be. In *NVSQ*, Koldewyn (1992) describes how Hispanic NPOs helped improve social services and voter districting. He also indicates that "changing realities have also motivated key organizations to replace older, piecemeal approaches to community problems with regional and strategic ones" (p. 135). In other words, the NPOs have been doing good work, but changes in the economic climate have stimulated NPOs to adopt more professional strategies.

1995-1998: Effectiveness and Accountability

Table 3 shows that after 1994, a new theme became dominant in the research on NPOs in the three journals in the study. Common terms used in the titles and abstracts for these articles were effectiveness, accountability, performance, and evaluation. This period revealed more emphasis on comparison: what organizations have done in the past compared to the present and how the landscape has changed. FitzGibbon (1997) states that "Nonprofits are scrambling to account for their fiscal policies,

management structure, and the value of their missions. This current crisis of accountability is only the most recent manifestation of a problem that has plagued voluntary organizations for over a century" (p. 27). In their study of NPO effectiveness, Herman and Renz (1998) indicate that "because funders' overall judgments of NPO effectiveness are more highly correlated with the implementation of these procedural elements of objective effectiveness, they may be disposed to support an organization that is seeking to develop or strengthen these good management practices" (p. 35). Both examples convey an industry movement toward increased accountability, evaluation, and professional management practices.

1999-2006: Management and Globalization

The year 1999 appeared to usher in a new era for NPOs and NGOs. The data shows an emphasis on terms such as NGO, international, strategy, management, civic, forms, and institutions. *NVSQ* devoted a supplement in 1999 to NGOs and the challenges of globalization. An *NVSQ* supplement in 2000 was devoted to collaboration and strategy. A supplement in 2004 highlights civic service internationally. *Voluntas* also began 1999 with articles about the third sector being at a "crossroads" and emphasizes globalization and NGOs. In 2004, *Voluntas* published an issue entitled "Managing Nonprofit Organizations." Articles dealt with subjects such as management challenges (Helmig, Jegers, & Lapsley, 2004), the effectiveness of pay-for-performance (Theuvsen, 2004), and strategic management (Van der Pijl & Sminia, 2004). Articles in *NML* during this time revealed a similar trend. In his article in 2001 entitled "Strategic Performance Measurement and Management in Nonprofit Organizations," Robert S. Kaplan outlined the benefits of adapting the Balanced Scorecard for use in nonprofit organizations. His emphasis on the need to "achieve strategic focus" (p. 369) exemplifies the sentiment of academic research in the field during this period.

2007-2009: Education and Becoming More Like Business

Already in 2006, we see an emphasis in research on nonprofit education programs and isomorphic tendencies of NPOs to become more like for-profit organizations with regard to management and measurement. In an article in *NVSQ*, Scott, Deschenes, Hopkins, Newman, and McLaughlin (2006) concluded the following about their research on advocacy organizations and field restructuring: "To be successful, emerging fields must gain traction in systems of higher education, the major gatekeeper and arbiter of professionalization efforts" (p. 709). In 2007, *NVSQ* devoted a supplement to university education programs in non-profit and philanthropic studies.

With regard to business rhetoric making its way into NPO circles, we find articles during this time on charity branding (Sargeant, Ford, & Hudson, 2008), "wholesaling

social change" (Hecht, 2008), governance (Speckbacher, 2008), and executive compensation (Mesch & Rooney, 2006).

The management of volunteers and measurement of their activity are also important subjects during this period. Mook, Handy, and Quarter (2007) point out that although there is extensive literature on the value of volunteerism, most of the research has not been about including volunteer activity in accounting and financial statements. The authors state that increased accountability requirements and project-based funding from donors involves costly and burdensome reporting practices that may not reflect the true value of an NPO's contribution. Mook et al. call for new accounting paradigm that "properly illustrates the value that they generate" (p. 59), but until such a standard is initiated, NPOs will still be measured against the same standards as business. In an article in *NML* about measuring the value of volunteers, Bowman (2009) states that his research is of use to nonprofit managers because it shows that volunteers are not substitutes for paid staff and that managers should consider activities such as recruiting, training, and supervising as "means to increase volunteer productivity" (p. 504). In their 2009 article about volunteer management, Brudney and Meijs (2009) suggest that volunteers be considered a natural resource. They recommend further research on preserving and growing the "volunteer energy" as well as determining which "strategies can be used to enrich volunteer management to recycle and grow the volunteer resource" (p. 577). These three articles focus on the improvement of NPO management and measurements.

2010: Strategy and Regulation

In 2010, the concepts of strategy and regulation appear more frequently, while the trend toward business discourse and practices continues. In 2010, *NVSQ* published a "mini symposium" on NPO self-regulation. Sidel (2010, p. 1040) indicates that self-regulation principles can be adopted for many reasons, including as a means to decrease competition, to sideline organizations that may bring harm to industry reputation, to gain greater access to donor funds, to avoid government regulation, and to "clarify and strengthen shared identity in particular parts of the nonprofit community." Bies (2010, p. 1058) maintains that self-regulation in Europe "serves variously to stimulate the nonprofit economy, to substitute or complement regulation by the state, or to institutionalize nonprofit practices and enhance nonprofit legitimacy."

Nezhina and Brudney (2010) analyze NPO adoption of the requirements mandated in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX), regulation that was passed to increase accountability and transparency in for-profit institutions. The authors found that adoption of SOX standards took place in larger organizations "under greater pressure for accountability" (p. 297). These organizations are expected to play by the same rules as their for-profit counterparts. In their study of the RED campaign aimed at combatting AIDS/HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis in Africa, Wirgau, Farley, and Jensen

(2010) argue against the commercialization of philanthropy, stating that the way products are sold to raise funds in this campaign places the focus on the consumer rather than the cause, results in decreased transparency, and allows business too great of a voice in determining how aid is spent. O'Brien (2010) found that NGOs are often "stuck in the middle" (p. 339), trying to maintain legitimacy while undergoing pressure to conform to professional norms: "The organization also faced increasing isomorphic pressures derived from changes in funding and the need to justify its performance, which in turn weakened the legitimacy of the organization" (p. 355). This example shows that while isomorphism may lead to greater legitimacy with one stakeholder, it may result in a loss of legitimacy with another.

Discussion

Overview and Contribution

The main objective of this study was to respond to the following research question: How is the adoption of the language of business expressed through themes in the academic research on nonprofit organizations? Topic modeling – a powerful method that to our knowledge has not been used in NPO studies – was employed to identify five main themes in the research on nonprofit organizations from 1990-2010. In their research, Ryan and Bernard (2003) asked whether automated procedures could be developed to identify themes. The research presented here shows how themes can be identified using such procedures.

The following themes were discovered using topic modeling: 1) 1990-1994: Establishing Purpose, Doing Good, Change; 2) 1995-1998: Effectiveness and Accountability; 3) 1999-2005: Management and Globalization; 4) 2006-2009: Education and Becoming More Like Business; 5) 2010 - ?: Strategy and Regulation. The themes represent changes in scholarship on NPOs over time, as well as a shift in vocabulary that represents the more managerial or professional lexicon fostered by business and government. In the 1990s, scholarship on NPOs in the specialty journals analyzed in this study focused mainly on the positive impact of NPOs, volunteerism, and establishing the role of NPOs in society. Later, the language evolved to reflect the managerialist vocabulary of business and its emphasis on management, performance, and outputs (Benavides, 2013; Bishop, 2007; Hood, 1991; Roberts et al., 2005; Van de Walle & Hammerschmid, 2011). The research on education in the journals is an important development as education is one of the systems in which new institutional rules – and vocabularies - manifest themselves and are further legitimated (Meyer, 1977). The widespread appropriation of the language of performance and measurement points to fundamental changes taking place within the field of the study of nonprofit organizations (Korff et al., 2015). When staff members - in this case

scholars - develop fluency in the language of business, this serves to increase legitimacy and further embeds the language in the organizations (Oakes et al., 1998).

Language adoption is not the only indicator of isomorphism, but it is an important one given that discursive practices and use of the business lexicon are a feature of social change (Fairclough, 1993; Korff et al., 2015; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Hence, studying texts that organizations produce provides insight into with whom the organization wants to identify for financial, political, or other purposes (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oakes et al., 1998; Verbruggen et al., 2011).

As institutions of higher learning adopt the language of business to maintain legitimacy, some scholars fear the marketization of education (Fairclough, 1993; Gumport, 2000) and call for new education models that focus on knowledge production for the public good instead of knowledge capitalism (Peters, 2013). Other scholars indicate that New Public Management is dead and will be replaced with a new management regime more focused on flexibility, stakeholder needs, and "one-stop provision," "end-to-end service reengineering", and "open-book government" (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006, p. 481). Sandberg (2012) indicates that nonprofits are still governed by neoliberal ideology and argues that researchers have a role to play in the development of the field. She indicates that scholars need to move beyond the dominant "discourse of nonprofit-as-aide" and create an opportunity *to change what is possible to say* about the nature of nonprofit service" (Sandberg, 2012, p. 955, emphasis added).

While scholars may not be able to control market and social forces, many agree that the academic voice is part of the professionalization debate. The way researchers investigate, write about, and make sense of organizational activity has the potential to impact both their own field as well as the fields they are studying (Eikenberry, 2009; Laasonen et al., 2012; Van Dijk, 1993).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

One limitation to the approach in analyzing NPO discourse was the use of three journals, though they are three top-tier journals in the field. Future research might include additional journals to provide an even more complete picture, or focus on non-specialty journals or trade publications and compare the theme development to the findings presented here.

Another limitation of the study is focusing on the use of vocabulary alone an indicator of the professionalization of academic research. While the language academics use in their research is a reflection of an attempt to gain or maintain legitimacy, there are additional indicators (Van Dijk, 2006). In addition, we did not differentiate between articles against, in favor of, or neutral toward professionalism. The thematic trend toward the NPM vocabulary in academic research of NPOs was clear, but future research might elaborate on the specific perspectives of the articles.

Future research might also increase the time period under study. The period 1990-2010 was selected for this study, but extending this time period might reveal additional theme development. It might also be interesting to analyze the journal articles from a discourse perspective to illustrate specifically how the themes are represented in the articles with regard to sentence syntax, mood and modality, lexical style, hyperbole, metaphors, etc. (Fairclough, 1993; Van Dijk, 1993).

Borrowing from Oakes et al. (1998), a follow-up study to this research might use topic modeling to analyze whether changes in identity can be distinguished based on the evolution of language use within a particular a NPO or group of NPOs.

Conclusion

What are the implications of the language scholars use to research NPOs? If one shares the opinion of Bucholtz and Hall (2004) that language is critical to identity production, then the language used by scholars in their research is not insignificant to academia or the nonprofit community. As discussed above, academia plays a role in NPO policy and development. The influence of the academic discourse on the development of the nonprofit sector will depend in part on how future research approaches NPO identity issues, approaches counter-discourses, and articulates actual or proposed changes in form and function.

Chapter 4

The big bug: The legitimation of the edible insect sector in the Netherlands

At the time of printing, an adapted version of this chapter was in the revise and resubmit process for a peer-reviewed SCI journal.

Abstract

This study analyzes the legitimation process of the edible insect sector in the Netherlands. While EU policy currently does not support large-scale production of insects for human or livestock consumption, the sector continues to gain cognitive and normative legitimacy and thus access to resources. The key findings suggest that legitimacy has been obtained thus far primarily as the result of producers employing intraindustry and interindustry legitimacy strategies, and that producers must now focus on institutional strategies to secure more accommodating legislation. However, discord among EU policies may hinder their efforts.

"Considering their efficiency to convert plant biomass to animal biomass, the failure to domesticate edible insects on any significant scale (except as a byproduct of silk and honey production) may have been a greater calamity in the global development of agriculture than we yet realize." (Gene DeFoliart, 1999, p. 44)

Introduction

With the global human population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, food security and environmental issues have become priorities for policy makers. The demand for meat alone is expected to increase by 76% (Alexandratos & Bruinsma, 2012). Given the livestock industry's impact on the environment - deforestation, soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, and water pollution - increasing production is not a sustainable solution to the future demand for protein (Garnett, 2011; Steinfeld et al., 2006). Moreover, reliance on foreign soybean meal and rising prices of soybean and fishmeal due to an increase in global demand (Van Huis, 2013), the environmental impact of soy production (Veldkamp & Bosch, 2015), and the use of soy in aquaculture (Henry, Gasco, Piccolo, & Founoulaki, 2015) add urgency to the search for alternative sources of protein.

Insects may be one such alternative. Insects convert their feed to protein more efficiently than livestock (Van Huis, 2013), produce fewer greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions (Oonincx et al., 2010), and require considerably less land to rear (Oonincx & De Boer, 2012). Given their potential as a more sustainable food and feed source, there is a market for insect protein. However, a lack of legislative clarity threatens sector progress. Yet despite legislative hurdles, support for the edible insect sector continues to gain momentum and legitimacy with stakeholders. This is significant because legitimacy is critical to securing resources (Suchman, 1995). Regulators confer legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996; Rao, Chandy, & Prabhu, 2008) and favorable legislation will be imperative to continued growth and success of the sector, but its absence has thus far not prohibited the sector from making cognitive and normative legitimacy gains and acquiring investment.

Rao, Chandy, and Prabhu (2008) suggest that more research into the legitimation process for products that have not yet received legislative or regulatory approval is needed to increase understanding of organizational legitimacy and the policy process. Analyzing the stages of legitimacy development in the edible insect sector development offers unique insight into this process. Moreover, we can document the process as it occurs rather than speculating or piecing together information after the fact (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). This exploratory study will therefore examine the products, the players, and the regulatory framework to provide insight into the legitimation process of the edible insect sector. It also raises questions about

reconciling the support for food and feed innovation with current sustainability and food security goals.

In recent years, the Netherlands has earned a reputation as a leader in the field of edible insects. The country is uniquely positioned to become a global player in insect protein innovation due to its expertise in climate control, farming, and logistics. However, current EU policy restrictions do not allow the production and sale of insects on a commercial scale as food for livestock or humans. Yet the Dutch edible insect sector continues to gain both normative and cognitive legitimacy, and we are interested in finding out how this process has evolved. We will specifically address the following question: *How has the edible insect sector in the Netherlands gained legitimacy despite lacking regulatory approval for its products*?

The paper is structured as follows. First, general information on insect uses and consumption will be provided, and current EU policy on edible insects will be discussed. An overview of legitimacy and the aspects of the construct that will be important for this study will then be presented. Next, the methodology will be outlined and the findings reported. The discussion will respond to the research question and offer some concluding remarks.

Scientific Argument for Use of Insects in Food, Feed, and Pharma

It is estimated that there are over 2000 edible insects worldwide (Jongema, 2015). The FAO reports that 2 billion people on the earth eat insects on a regular basis (Van Huis et al., 2013). Beetles, caterpillars, bees, wasps, ants, grasshoppers, locusts, and crickets are among the most popular insects for human consumption (Van Huis et al., 2013). Insects are high in nutritional value with regard to protein, fat, amino acids, and micronutrients (DeFoliart, 1992; Rumpold & Schlüter, 2013; Van Huis et al., 2013). The exoskeletons of many insects also contain chitin, a polysaccharide which shows promise for medical (Lee, Simpson, & Wilson, 2008) and industrial applications (Newton, Sheppard, Watson, Burtle, & Dove, 2005). As promising as insects may be nutritionally, the general public in industrialized nations has not embraced entomophagy. However, the "prestige" of edible insects appears to be on the rise (Ramos-Elorduy, 2009, p. 273). Additionally, a Belgian study in 2014 concluded that gradual acceptance of insects into Western diets may occur as a result of emphasizing and publicizing the similarities between crustaceans and insects; increasing the general public's exposure to edible insects through experimental tasting; and preparation of insects according to popular tastes, textures, and appearances (Megido et al., 2014).

The insects that currently show the most potential for consumption and processing in the Netherlands are mealworms, black soldier flies, crickets, and grasshoppers. In an article comparing mealworm production to livestock production, Oonincx and De Boer (2012) conclude that given land use and other factors,

mealworms should be considered a sustainable alternative to milk, chicken, pork, or beef. Compared to chickens, pigs, and cattle, crickets are 2, 4, and 12 times more efficient at converting feed to meat (Van Huis, 2013). Advantages of the black soldier fly include that it can be reared on waste streams, is not considered a pest, can replace soybean and fishmeal in feed, and that oil extracted from the black soldier fly can be used in food or feed (Newton et al., 2005; Sheppard, Newton, Thompson, & Savage, 1994). In addition, once the extraction has taken place, the remains can be used as fertilizer. Different types of grasshoppers may also replace fishmeal in chicken and rabbit feed (Van Huis, 2013).

Given the social, environmental, and economic potential of an edible insect sector, the FAO has endorsed the development of an edible insect industry through publications in 2010 and 2013 (FAO, 2010; Van Huis et al., 2013). The World Economic Forum (WEF) has also shown support for innovation in the sector. In August 2015, the WEF recognized Protix Biosystems, a Dutch company specialized in protein extraction from the black soldier fly, as a technology pioneer. While innovation in the field is taking off, legislation in the EU surrounding edible insects remains cautious and slow.

EU Policy on Insects as Food and Feed

Legislation of insects as food and feed is still under consideration at the European Union. Currently, insects may be sold in small quantities if produced for human consumption, but insect products may not be used as ingredients. In November 2015, the EU passed new legislation on novel food for human consumption - "food that has not been consumed to any significant degree in the EU before May 1997" (EC, 2015). Producers rearing insects for human consumption will be required to submit a novel food dossier complete with safety assessment within two years of the regulation entering into force. The International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed (IPIFF), opposed the 2-year timeline, indicating that it was "unrealistic to gather all the necessary documentation required in the NF application dossiers" (IPIFF, 2015). In October 2015, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) was expected to release a ruling regarding the safety of insects as food and feed. However, their report indicated that more research was needed before further recommendations could be made (EFSA, 2015).

The use of insects in pet foot is allowed, but use in feed for animals reared for human consumption is prohibited under Regulation EC 999/2001 (EC, 2001) and EC Directive 2002/32 (EC, 2002). The exception is aquaculture; in October 2013 the EU allowed the use of non-ruminant proteins as feed for farmed fish (Van der Spiegel, Noordam, & Van der Fels-Klerx, 2013). However, insects may not yet be used in aquaculture due to strict slaughterhouse requirements that were not written with insect breeding in mind. The limits to human and livestock consumption involve safety issues, the main concerns being heavy metals, toxic chemicals, allergens, and

pathogens (Van Huis, 2015; Van der Spiegel et al., 2013). However, recent research of fly larvae in animal feed indicated that "with appropriate quality assurance mechanisms and testing regimes in place to monitor chemicals in the larvae then we can conclude that it is feasible to produce fly larvae that are free from chemicals of concern to the animal feed sector" (Charlton et al., 2015, p. 15).

Van der Speigel et al. (2013) indicate that there is lack of clarity regarding legislation on insects. For example, issues such as feed/substrates (EC 767/2009, 1069/2009, 142/2011), products of animal origin (EC 852/2004, 853/2004), and feed for pigs and poultry (EC 999/2001; 1069/2009, 142/2011) are not clearly addressed (Van der Spiegel et al., 2013, p. 674). One of the main concerns regarding the use of insects in pig and poultry feed is BSE transmission, yet Van der Spiegel et al. indicate that findings have shown little or no chance transmission from insects to other non-ruminants. They suggest that these findings may have some bearing on future EU legislation with regard to insects in feed.

Having provided some background information on edible insects and the policies that regulate their production, we will now turn to the theoretical framework that will help us determine how insect producers have acquired legitimacy despite facing legislative hurdles.

Organizational Legitimacy

According to Low and Abrahamson (1997, p. 440), when a group of organizations that "use similar inputs and technologies, produce similar products, and serve similar customers" enters the market with a new product or service, they create a new organizational form or industry – an industry in its emergent phase. In this phase, legitimacy is the organizations' biggest obstacle (Low & Abrahamson, 1997).

Legitimacy refers to the perception by stakeholders and the public that an organization's activities are congruent with prevailing norms and values (Suchman, 1995). This perception is important because it translates into access to resources and increases the chances of firm survival (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Parsons, 1956; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Aldrich and Fiol (1994) divide legitimacy into two categories: sociopolitical and cognitive. Sociopolitical legitimacy refers to "the extent to which a new form conforms to recognized principles or accepted rules and standards" (p. 646).

Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) divide sociopolitical legitimacy further into socio-political regulatory legitimacy and sociopolitical normative legitimacy. Sociopolitical regulatory legitimacy (hereafter "regulative legitimacy") involves complying with legal and professional standards and regulations. It has been operationalized in previous studies by measuring government agency support and policy establishment (Deephouse, 1996; Golant & Sillince, 2007; Singh, Tucker, & House, 1986).

Sociopolitical normative legitimacy (hereafter "normative legitimacy") involves doing what is right by way of societal values and norms, procedures, and structures. Previous studies have operationalized normative legitimacy by measuring public support via the media (Deephouse, 1996), professional accreditation (Ruef & Scott, 1998), participation in professional associations (Greenwood, Suddaby, & Hinings, 2002), and involvement in professional alliances (Rao et al., 2008).

In contrast to sociopolitical legitimacy, cognitive legitimacy refers to society's understanding of an organization (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Suchman, 1995). Firms can increase their cognitive legitimacy by aligning themselves with other legitimate actors or actions, or through discourse that appeals to currently held beliefs or creates new ones (Suchman, 1995). Aldrich and Fiol (1994) indicate that cognitive legitimacy can be determined by measuring how much people know about the organization.

Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggest that "the sequence in which the sources of legitimacy are acquired is important" (p. 428), but they do not expand on this relationship. Suchman (1995) indicates that while there is no mandatory order of progression governing legitimacy acquisition, regulative is the easiest to obtain and manipulate, followed by normative and then cognitive.

Legitimation Strategies

One of the hurdles to gaining legitimacy for new industries and organizations is a "liability of newness" (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Stinchcombe, 1965). Aldrich and Fiol (1994, p. 649) hold that "founding entrepreneurs of innovative ventures – the first stage in creating new industries" overcome the liability of newness and gain legitimacy by implementing strategies designed to build trust, reliability, and a good reputation. Other research has also found that organizations can engage strategies to gain legitimacy (for example, Suchman, 1995; Scherer, Palazzo, & Seidl, 2013; Tornikoski & Newbert, 2007; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

Aldrich and Fiol indicate that organizations can gain legitimacy by implementing organizational, intraindustry, interindustry, and institutional strategies. Organizations gain trust by employing organizational strategies such as using language that appeals to stakeholders and communicating their vision in terms that mesh with social beliefs but also promise something better. Intraindustry collaboration involves developing sector standards and parameters together. When new ventures within a sector are too competitive with one another to work together to position their product(s), they hinder the legitimacy of the entire sector. A common vision or design increases cognitive legitimacy and explicit standards serve to increase normative legitimacy.

Interindustry strategies include establishing trade associations and cooperation with existing industries. Working through trade associations increases a new venture's cognitive legitimacy by creating a sense of a stable sector, for example through

collaborative media campaigns, conferences and trade fairs, and publications. Cooperating with existing industries increases normative legitimacy by establishing the venture as a reliable, credible partner (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994).

Finally, once reliability and reputation have been established, entrepreneurs can pursue institutional strategies. The development of industry-focused curricula by educational institutions spreads the word about the industry, thus resulting in increased cognitive legitimacy. Normative and regulative legitimacy can be acquired when organizations establish collective lobbying operations to influence the creation and scope of regulations and policies (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994).

Having discussed legitimacy and the strategies emerging organizations can pursue to overcome their liability of newness, the following section will outline the methods used to study the legitimation process of the insect sector in the Netherlands. The results section will analyze the findings in terms of Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) strategy framework to provide insight into how organizations acquire normative and cognitive legitimacy when they lack regulative legitimacy.

Methods

The study represents case research in the tradition of "inquiry from the inside" (Evered & Louis, 1981) in which the first author was engaged in the events as they were unfolding. This approach is "particularly suited to early inquiry into new research territory" due to its explorative nature: there are no preconceived notions or categories to limit the researcher" (p. 390). In addition, understanding context is vital when interpreting new events or situations. A possible disadvantage of this approach is that the researcher's relationship with an organization may influence participation and responses in interview situations. The interview questions in this study were designed to obtain the interviewees' stories, experiences, and opinions regarding the emergence of the insect sector, with minimum input from the interviewer. We believe that by combining these aspects we were able to create a narrative and analysis that are "authentic, plausible, and versimilitudinous" (Humphreys & Brown, 2002, p. 427) and help us understand this fascinating new field.

In order to improve construct validity, we used a triangulation of data sources: interviews, direct observation, and archival sources. Additionally, for transparency and replication purposes – and improved reliability - detailed files for the sources were maintained, interviews were fully transcribed, organizations were referred to by name (rather than anonymously), and long extracts of the interviews were included in the study (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010).

We conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with experts and stakeholders included breeders, industry experts, researchers, government officials, and livestock

farmers in the emerging sector. An initial list of participants was developed with a producer to include representatives from business, government, education, and other organizations involved in the sector. Additionally, during the interviews, some of the participants suggested interviewing others in the sector who might view the subject differently or approach it from another perspective. Table 1 presents a list of interviewees by sector, scope, and capacity.

Table 1 Background of Interviewees

Interviewee	Sector	Scope National/ International	Capacity
1	Public - Innovation	N	Director
2	Banking	N	Bank Director
3	Livestock	I	Small/Medium Business Owner
4	Industry Consultant	N	Owner
5	Higher Education	I	Researcher (former director R&D)
6	Insect Sector Consultant	I	Owner
7	Public	N	Regional Government Representative
8	Public	N	Local Government Representative
9	Automation	I	Manager
10	Higher Education	N	Director
11	Feed	N	Director
12	Public	I	European Union Parliamentarian
13	Livestock	N	Owner
14	Feed	I	Director
15	Insect Breeding	I	Project Director
16	Insect Breeding	I	Owner/ Entrepreneur
17	Insect Breeding	I	Owner/ Entrepreneur
18	Higher Education	I	Researcher
19	Higher Education	I	Researcher

The interviews were recorded, fully transcribed, and lasted between 30 and 87 minutes. The participants were asked open-ended questions designed to allow them to tell their story and their perception of the business, important actors and issues, their motivation for involvement in the emerging sector, and their outlook on the future of the sector. The interviews were read line-for-line and individually open-coded which resulted in a list of codes. Common statements or phrases found

in the interviews became first-order codes (Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Following Miles and Huberman (1994), an iterative, comparative coding process "to identify similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes" (p. 9) was employed. The transcriptions were then printed and notes were written in the margins for both categorization and retrieval purposes. This process helped to ensure that categories and patterns discovered were products of the data rather than researcher inference. Axial coding followed in order to elucidate the predominant categories (Boeije, 2010). To determine the reliability of the coding system, one of the co-authors analyzed the first-order codes with little prior instruction and no discussion in order to achieve the most objective results. Interrater agreement was 72% and kappa was .66 which qualifies as 'good' (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986). Differences in the coding were then discussed and final codes were agreed upon.

In addition to the formal interviews, direct observation was also employed. The first author attended two conferences, 5 meetings, an all-day workshop, and a regional one-day conference attended by business, government, and higher education institutions concerning the creation of an insect hub in the region as a new revenue model. These events allowed the researcher to speak informally with breeders, farmers, technicians, researchers, food innovators, and policy makers; to observe their communication with one another; and to document proposed industry development strategies and activities.

A LexisNexis search of Dutch newspapers from 2000-2015 was conducted using the search term "insecten eten" ("eating insects"). After a number of other terms were tried - for example, edible insects, entomophagy, "eetbare insecten" ("edible insects") - this is the search term that gave us the best indication of public interest in the subject of insects as food and feed in the Netherlands. Prior studies have found that the media can serve as an indicator of cognitive and normative legitimacy (Deephouse, 1996; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Hannan, Carroll, Dundon, & Torres, 1995; Humphreys, 2010; Pollock & Rindova, 2003).

Results

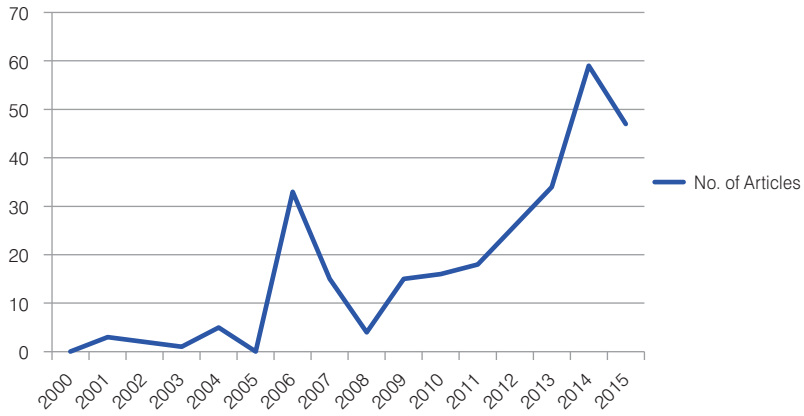
Media

Media attention to the edible insect sector in the Netherlands is on the increase. While this increase is not necessarily the result of strategy on the part of producers, it does point to a rising awareness - cognitive legitimacy - of the sector which will be important if and when producers develop media campaigns for their products.

A LexisNexis search of the term "insecten eten" in Dutch news sources from 2000-2010 resulted in 476 articles. Upon further analysis, 278 of these articles were related to insects as food and feed for human or livestock consumption (as opposed

to prey for birds, bats, etc.). The search showed a marked rise in the number of articles over the years. In 2000, there were no articles, in 2004 there were 5, in 2006 there were 33, in 2010 there were 16, in 2013 there were 34, and in 2014 there were 59 articles. Figure 1 shows a positive trend of newspaper articles about insect breeding sector in the Netherlands.

Figure 1 Development of Dutch newspaper articles about edible insects for the period 2000-2015.



While most of the articles in the Dutch newspapers about edible insects are about insects as food and not necessarily about the development of a new sector, the growth in coverage points to an increase in cognitive legitimacy - public knowledge about and awareness of edible insects as a possible solution to a societal problem. If "the media are one institutionally rich indicator of society-wide legitimacy" (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008), then we can infer from these results here that the cognitive legitimacy of the insect sector is on the rise.

This increase in public interest in edible insects in the Netherlands corresponds to the increase in global scientific interest. Van Huis (2015, p. 5) reports that a Web of Science search of "edible insects" "yielded 10 results from 2000-2004, 18 from 2005-2009 and 65 from 2010 to 2014; the same search with Google Scholar yielded 265, 460 and 1,010 results, respectively." The launch of the academic journal *Insects as Food and Feed* in 2015 provides further indication of scientific attention to and investment in the subject. In addition, according to an article retrieved from the

ScienceDirect database in September 2015, the numbers 1, 3, and 7 most downloaded food and technology articles in the previous 90 days were about the use of insects in feed ("Most Downloaded," 2015). In January 2016, the numbers were 1, 8, and 11 ("Most Downloaded," 2016).

Interviews

According to the interview participants, the following companies are leading the sector in the Netherlands at this time: Koppert, Kreca (Protifarm), Meertens, Protix, Ruig en Zonen, Van de Ven, and Vivara. DeliBugs and Tasty Bugs breed mainly for their own production of edible insect products. Protix is breeding black soldier flies as its main business. The other companies breed insects such as crickets, grasshoppers, and mealworms for the hobby feed market as their main business or part of an existing business. Additionally, there are several larger organizations that are not yet part of the industry network organizations but which are developing breeding and/or processing facilities. They are not members of insect industry networks, they declined to be mentioned in this study, and they have maintained a low profile despite significant research and development investments in the sector.

The interview coding resulted in over 90 codes. These codes were further evaluated and reduced to 65 codes after accounting for similarity of meaning. The codes were then divided into issues "representing important themes in the data" (Boeije, 2010, p. 113.). These include Economic and Social Opportunity, Networks and Cooperation, Regulation and Policies, and Public Acceptance. Using Aldrich and Fiol's (1994) legitimation strategy framework, each issue was identified with a particular strategy or strategies. These are outlined below along with excerpts from the interviews.

Organizational Strategies

Economic and Social Opportunity. The interviews and observations in this study revealed that the entrepreneurs in the insect industry are framing their appeals for support in terms that resonate with the stakeholders. For example, it was observed in meetings that entrepreneurs spoke of the industry as a certainty or inevitability: "There's a 100% chance that this will become a big industry. It's just a matter of time." Depending on the stakeholder, the emphasis was on solutions to regional economic and employment issues, soy dependence, reducing the nation's carbon footprint, sustainable farming and the feeding the global population in the future, and/or the "unavoidable" shortage in protein and the financial gains to be made in meeting that demand. They conducted themselves " 'as if' the activity were a reality" in order to "convince others of the tangible reality" of the insect sector (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994, p. 651). By comparing their products to shrimp and sushi, reiterating that many cultures consume or have consumed insects, and repeating that chickens and pigs eat

insects in nature, Dutch entrepreneurs "disguise the truly radical nature of their activity and the challenge it may pose to established organizations" (Aldrich & Fiol, p. 652). Before intraindustry and interindustry strategies can be pursued, entrepreneurs must gain trust and support from those with whom it hopes to cooperate. Organizational strategies that emphasize opportunities have been vital in gaining this support.

The interview participants indicated that the Netherlands is uniquely positioned to become a leader in insect protein innovation due to its expertise in climate control, farming, and logistics. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for a new business model as conventional farming and livestock production will not sustain the region economically in the future. The participants also stated that the Dutch may not be breeding the insects themselves in the future, but rather will export their knowledge about how to breed the insects and how to build safe breeding and processing facilities.

> In the agriculture sector in the last 50 years, everything was focused on optimization and maximization of production. We can produce excellent products, but we can no longer compete with the prices of others in the same range of goods.
> *Regional Government Representative*

> The Netherlands is of course a world champion on agro-food … we have a lot of knowledge. It [edible insect sector] could be a new destiny for the Netherlands.
> *Entrepreneur*

> We aren't going to sell worms … we have to sell knowledge - preferably packaged as concepts - to the rest of the world.
> *Industry Consultant*

The interviewees all mentioned price, scale of production, volumes, and mass production as key to the success of the industry. Protix, Enterra (Canada), and Enviroflight (U.S.) have fully automated black soldier fly production and processing.

> It's going to be about volumes. Look, the uses [of insects] are fairly diverse. You see that in all new markets. The focus is often on one sales market even though there are many more markets and uses. Personally, I think the first big uses will be in animal feed and supplements in animal feed and a basis for pharmaceuticals, namely in crèmes and that sort of thing.
> *Automation Expert*

All of the interviewees were positive about the economic and social opportunities that the insect sector could bring to the Netherlands: new business model, soy/fishmeal alternative, feed market potential, use as an ingredient in other food/feed/pharmaceuticals, and a possible solution to the global protein shortage were among the most mentioned indicators. Only one interview participant, a feed industry expert, was of the opinion that the feed market should not be the target market at this time. His opinion was not to rush sector development. His recommendation was to professionalize, breed for niche markets, and enter other markets only once cost of production is competitive, larger concerns are involved, and thorough risk assessments and testing have been completed.

Intraindustry and Interindustry Strategies

*Networks and Cooperation***.** Interview participants indicated that networks have played a key role in the establishment of the sector. The term network here refers to the formal trade associations such as Venik (De Verenigde Nederlandse Insectenkwekers - the Dutch association of insect breeders), IPIP (Insect Protein Innovation Platform), and IPIFF (the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed), as well as to the formal and informal networks formed by entrepreneurs, government officials, business, and education.

Venik was established in April 2008 by a small group of breeders. Current members include Protifarm, Meertens, Nostimos, Protix, Tasty Bugs, Van de Ven, and Vivara. Venik was helpful in securing grants from the national government for further academic research into edible insects. The establishment of an association of breeders provided the legitimacy academia needed to approach the government for funding. The collaboration was mutually beneficial. One member of Venik indicated that the cooperation with internationally renowned Dutch academic experts gave the breeders the credibility with the government that they needed to be taken seriously. In other words, collaboration brought legitimacy to both of their efforts.

IPIFF was established in 2013. Members include Protix (Netherlands), Ynsect (France), Hermetia (Germany), Koppert (Netherlands), ProtiFarm (Netherlands), Jiminis (France), HiProMine (Poland), Micronutris (France), and Entomo Farm (France). (The IPIFF website also lists 13 associate members.) The purpose of establishing IPIFF was to professionalize the lobby effort at the European Union level. Venik was working on a national level, but was unable to effectively reach beyond the Dutch borders.

The Insect Protein Innovation Platform was launched in 2015 by local and regional governments, in cooperation with Vivara. The goal of the platform is to bring together government, business, and education to make the southeast region of the Netherlands a hub of insect innovation in Europe. Insectpoint, a center for applied research and development of edible insects established by Wageningen University, regional government, and entrepreneurs, was opened in Lelystad, Netherlands in 2014. The

International Insect Centre (IIC) is a network, co-op organization established by 15 Dutch organizations whose goal is to accelerate sector development and push for legislation favorable to the sector. IIC has also received local government support in cash and kind. IPIP, IPIFF, Insectpoint, and IIC are just four examples of regional networks and platforms that are being developed across the country and the European Union.

With regard to networking, the term triple helix – collaboration between business, government, and education – was popular in the interviews. Working under the triple helix model, local government formed a group of participants in 2012 to discuss the question, "What is the future of the agri-food sector in the region in 2030?" The response was sustainable farming. The officials interviewed indicated that triple helix collaboration was necessary to respond to this question because any solutions for creating a robust economy in the region must be a) economically viable and there must be companies willing to pursue them; b) the government must ensure that the local population is educated in the field and will remain in the area to carry out the work and; c) entrepreneurs must have local and regional government support.

> I always talk about the golden triangle…I think the Ministry is interested because the Dutch are the second exporter of agricultural produce in the world and they want to keep ahead of all kinds of developments. So the Ministry has always been supportive. I would say of course Venik, let's say the private enterprise, and then of course the academia. That triangle made it really work.
> *Researcher*

Support from government involves not only creating a forum to discuss issues but also financial support to stimulate innovation and growth. Obtaining resources through grants and subsidies is an example of "legitimacy by association" (Baum & Oliver, 1991, p. 189.) National and EU subsidies for innovation in sustainable food and agriculture are being awarded to Dutch producers, but the producers preferred not to share specific information with regard to which subsidies and the amount of monetary support involved. Examples of Dutch subsidy programs applicable to the edible insect sector include WBSO (to stimulate research, development, and innovation), Innovatiebox, MKB Innovatiestiumulering Top Sectoren, and OP EFRO Zuid-Nederland. Regarding EU subsidies, the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation and Horizon 2020 SME-Instrument are programs to which organizations involved in the production and processing of insects can apply for funding. Furthermore, government funding of one million Euros was approved for the Supro2 research program, which involved two Venik members and Wageningen University, for further study into the use of insects. This project was the result of intraindustry and

interindustry strategies at work within a formal triple helix network to stimulate innovation and research.

The informal networks between the Dutch breeders, policy makers, and business have also been instrumental in bringing the sector to where it is now. Interviewees spoke of informal meetings held in homes and at each other's offices concerning how to obtain government support for insect rearing projects in the region, and what the opportunities might be for breeders, for farmers, and for feed companies. Projects such as Kip & Ei ("chicken & egg") have been established throughout the sector by research institutes, entrepreneurs, and feed companies to test feeding mealworms to chickens, for example. Additionally, conferences have been organized (e.g., Wageningen, May 2014; Venlo, January 2016) and workshops on insects and insect breeding have taken place (HAS University of Applied Sciences [HAS], 25 March 2015 and 15 March 2016; Wageningen University, 3 November 2015 and 18 February 2016). Researchers from Wageningen and HAS are working with breeders such as Protix, Vivara, Van de Ven, and Protifarm to learn more about breeding, feeding, and processing insects.

Not all of the network meetings and collaborations have met with success, however. The biggest threat to the industry moving forward, according to the interview participants, is trust and collaboration among breeders. This issue was emphasized by nearly every interviewee.

> You can see that the real will to work together isn't always there because everyone thinks that he's sitting on the egg of Columbus. Everyone sees the pot of gold and doesn't want to share it.
> *Bank Director*

> The European lobby work could have been better. What I've seen so far is that people that are responsible for that were not completely on the same wavelength which is okay, which is acceptable, but if they would have been and they would have pushed that forward a bit more then maybe, I mean in 1997 we got novel food regulation. Now it's 2015 and we're still deciding whether insects are supposed to be novel food or not. I mean, 18 years. This could have gone quicker.
> *Researcher*

Cooperation between research institutions, entrepreneurs, and government is a critical element for the sector in terms of safety, trust, innovation, and public image. Wageningen University, HAS, University of Maastricht, KU Leuven, and TNO (Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research) were mentioned by the interview participants as partner organizations.

> It's extremely important to have things validated independently… you need the proof … We also do tests in our company in cooperation with the HAS and if that comes out [in the press] it's great if the name HAS or Wageningen is attached. It carries more weight.
> *Livestock Industry Expert*

Three interviewees indicated that working with the research organizations was essential for safety studies and necessary for maintaining government support. Wageningen was mentioned by most of the interviewees as a key partner. The institution has earned a reputation internationally as a leader in the field, in part due to its prominent scientists, activities such as the City of Insects in 2006 and the first conference on insects for food and feed in 2014, and its association with the FAO (FAO, 2014).

Cooperation within the sector and with organizations in other industries has been the driving force behind getting the edible insect sector started in the Netherlands. Producers especially are building networks and pursuing strategies to develop government and business interest in their products and potential products.

Institutional Strategies

Regulation and Policies. The UN publication of *Edible Insects* in 2013 appears to have marked a turning point for the sector globally. However, in many countries the laws are still not in place to accommodate insect rearing for food and feed. In the Netherlands, Venik was established to lobby national policymakers to improve the legislative climate for insect production. Interviewees' views on Venik's effectiveness were mixed, though everyone agreed that professional associations are necessary and that Venik played an important role in communication with the Dutch government and Wageningen University in 2007-2008. According to information obtained in meetings, workshops, and from meeting minutes, the organization is in the process of professionalizing and has developed a handbook and certification for breeders. The organization is also in the process of creating a food-grade hygiene code which, one interview participant stated, is a very important signal to officials and the public about how seriously producers take safety, hygiene, and regulation of the sector.

Interview participants in contact with officials at the national level indicated that the Dutch government has been very supportive of the sector. However, all of the participants interviewed indicated that a strong lobby presence in the sector is necessary to educate and inform legislators. With regard to the lobby efforts at the EU level, this task has gone to IPIFF. With an office in Brussels and a more professional approach to securing legislation, the organization has developed a reputation as *the* voice of European insect breeders for the sector. Even with representation in Brussels, however, the legislation process can be tedious.

> Well, I think this is always a familiar problem with politics is that sometimes they're running behind reality, so to say. So the world is developing and they have laws that are in place but they need to be updated…
> *EU Parliamentarian*

> The laws are always a step behind. That's the problem. The laws don't know these elements, just as the laws at the moment are unable to deal with the Internet and virtual reality. That's why I get so frustrated when in the Netherlands we're always the most well behaved kid in the class… Or are we going to create a climate here in which we let entrepreneurs be entrepreneurs?
> *Bank Director*

Progress is not occurring as quickly as some would like, and some Dutch companies may not wait around for European legislation to enter the global market.

> That company has the technology. If the laws don't change soon, they've already said that they'll go to India or China because they've already got other business there. They'll develop the know-how here and then they'll export it.
> *Entrepreneur*

> But also for Protix I know that if the legislation doesn't come quick, they may go to other countries… If the impediments are too high here in the Netherlands, you know, go abroad.
> *Researcher*

The interviews indicated that lack of cooperation among breeders may be the sector's greatest challenge long-term, but that legislation is the biggest bottleneck in sector development. Breeders are working with researchers, suppliers, and officials to "check off" the most important requirements for the establishment of a new sector, as one producer put it, so that they are ready for production once legislation is passed:

> Number 1: food safety; Number 2: professional/trade organizations; Number 3: when you walk into a factory, safety principles, cleaning protocols… and Number 4 is 'I need to know something, who do I talk to [to get the answer]?'
> *Entrepreneur*

The entrepreneur continued by saying that the insect sector will only really exist once businesses involved in the breeding and processing of insects as food and feed are generating cash flows. Yet these cash flows will only exist throughout the sector once EU policies regulating the use of insects in food and feed have been changed. As the interviews showed, collaboration is essential in building the legitimacy that will convince legislators to put edible insects on their agenda.

Organizational, Intraindustry, Interindustry, Institutional Strategies

Public Acceptance. The perception of insect breeding for food and feed is changing. According to the interviews, the Dutch population is currently not ready to add insects to its diet and may not be for the next 5-10 years, but due to sustainability-related issues, people are more open to the idea of adding insect protein to food. With regard to feed, the "yuck factor" does not play a role, and only EU legislation in holding that market back. Transparency, nudging the market from feed to food, addressing safety issues and the fear of mass production of insects, and getting the consumer used to insects as a solution rather than a problem are all key to gaining public confidence and support.

> People don't like insects so eating an insect is certainly not what people will be immediately enthusiastic about it. If you just use it as a protein alternative and then indeed even one step before that is putting it into feed and not into food, then of course you can build on experience. And at a certain moment, [you have to] communicate, "Well, we have been using that for years now" and then probably it's much easier to get it accepted.
> *EU Parliamentarian*

> In this phase, involving the consumer, you need to emphasize the nudging possibilities.
> *Food Industry Expert*

According to the interview participants, one of the main drivers of the insect sector is sustainability and the need for sustainable protein alternatives. They referred to Dutch dependence on soybean meal from Brazil, carbon footprint reduction, feeding the global population, and environmental improvement.

> You begin because you think you can make money. Period. And in the end also with the protein question in Europe, all the soy that is imported, environmental issues, sustainability, if you make the link with animal feed then you make the sector more sustainable.

> The circular economy idea is extremely important, natural fertilizer, local food production.
> *Livestock Industry Expert*

> A sector exists because it meets the needs of customers. I think that the needs of the customer are becoming more and more holistic. People are becoming more aware. There will always be a large part of society that does nothing, but increasingly people are considering the consequences of their behavior and choices.
> *Entrepreneur*

The interview participants believe sustainability issues will have a positive impact on public acceptance and encouragement of the sector going forward. Although the

Table 2 Gaining Legitimacy in the Insect Sector.

Issue	Activity	Current Status
Economic & Social Opportunity	Narratives	Ongoing
Network/ Cooperation	Dominant Design	No agreement
	Collaboration	Ongoing
	Trade Association	Established
	Collaboration	Ongoing
	Business with other firms	Beginning
	Cooperation with universities & institutes	Ongoing
	Develop curricula for the sector	Influencing but not developing
Regulation & Policy	Collective marketing & lobbying to secure industry presence and develop regulations	Beginning
	Establishing safety standards and protocols	Beginning
Public Acceptance	Individual Action	
	Collective campaign	No collective campaign at this time
	Collaboration	Ongoing
	Cooperation with educational organizations	Influencing but not developing curricula
	Cooperation with educational organizations	Beginning

interviewees indicated that the image of insects poses a potential threat, they were overwhelmingly positive that the public would support insects as food and ingredients in the short-term and insects as feed in the long-term.

Gaining public acceptance does not belong to any one strategy, but can be the result of any of them. For example, as part of an organizational strategy, entrepreneurs develop narratives to gain broad support for their activities: "stories can form the currency of communications to a wider public" (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994, p. 652) and serve to make the organization "more familiar, understandable, acceptable, and thus more legitimate to key constituencies" (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001, p. 550). The Dutch producers have not yet embarked on publicity campaigns. However, participation in regional and national television and radio (e.g., Ruig & Zonen products on a popular Dutch late-night talk show in May 2015 and an interview with Vivara on a regional business program in January 2016) have allowed producers to share their narrative.

Strategy (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994)	**Legitimacy Goal**	**Example**
Organizational	Cognitive	Ruig & Zonen, RTL Late Night TV; Vivara Omroep Venlo
	Normative	Behaving "as if"; comparison to existing products - disguising radical nature
Intraindustry/reliability	Cognitive	
Intraindustry/reliability	Normative	Protix & Vivara meetings
Interindustry/reputation	Cognitive	VENIK
Interindustry/reputation	Cognitive/Normative	Local government investment in platforms/programs, e.g. IPIP platform, InsectCentre; WEF Pioneer Award to Protix National and EU subsidy programs for sustainable innovations in food and agriculture
Interindustry/reputation	Normative	DeliBugs delivery to Albert Heijn; Outside investment in Protix; Protix delivery to Coppis
Interindustry	Normative	Producers working with Wageningen, HAS, Louis Bolk, Maastricht on tests, workshops, advisory capacity
Institutional	Cognitive	
Institutional	Normative/Regulative	IPIFF
Intraindustry	Normative/Regulative	VENIK goal to establish hygiene code
Organizational	Normative	Media (see Econ Opp)
Intraindustry	Normative	
Interindustry	Normative	(examples in Network above)
Institutional	Normative	
Institutional	Normative	

With regard to intraindustry strategy, acceptance can rise when positive results are publicized or firms receive recognition for outstanding products or performance (Rao, 1994). Thus, although Protix received WEF recognition, the sector as a whole enjoys legitimacy gains from the positive attention. Similarly, interindustry strategies may increase acceptance as endorsement by a legitimate partner can also influence public opinion of an organization and sector.

Institutional strategies include developing university curricula and influencing legislation. The Dutch insect sector is just beginning to pursue to these strategies. Successful integration of the sector within academia both reflects and generates public knowledge and acceptance. Dutch producers have been working with institutes of higher education since the Supro 2 project. With regard to legislation, strategies to establish more accommodating laws are in progress. If this is achieved, public acceptance of the industry is not guaranteed, but government approval lends legitimacy to their efforts.

To summarize, the research here shows that economic opportunities, networks, regulations, and public acceptance are issues that producers and stakeholders in the edible insect sector have found key to future success of the sector. Table 2 presents a summary of the information above, illustrating the legitimacy strategies employed to gain regulative, normative, and cognitive legitimacy. As indicated previously, intra-industry and interindustry strategies are mainly at play. The sector is now beginning to develop institutional strategies to increase regulative legitimacy.

Discussion

Global concerns about rising population, food security, and environmental degradation have led entrepreneurs, researchers, and policy makers to question traditional methods of protein production and develop alternatives. One such alternative is insect protein. Despite current legislative obstacles in the EU to produce and sell insects on a commercial scale as food for livestock or humans, the edible insect sector continues to gain both normative and cognitive legitimacy in the Netherlands, a country whose infrastructure and expertise in farming and agriculture create the potential for it to become a leading force in the sector. This study therefore set out to respond to the question, "How has the edible insect sector in the Netherlands gained legitimacy despite lacking regulatory approval for its products?"

In order to increase sector legitimacy and thus access to resources, Dutch insect producers have pursued and are pursuing organizational, intraindustry, interindustry, and institutional legitimacy strategies (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). The research in this study shows that organizations are currently focused on intraindustry and interindustry strategies, with institutional strategies underway. Intraindustry and interindustry strategies

include informal meetings, research projects, the establishment of partnership platforms, supplier contracts, and lobbying efforts.

Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggested a possible hierarchy pertaining to legitimacy acquisition – from regulative to normative to cognitive – yet legitimacy acquisition in the Dutch insect sector has not followed this path. Although it is not unusual for legislation to trail public opinion (e.g., US environmental and poverty legislation in the 1970s), the delay in edible insect legislation may point to bigger issues within the EU in which the current governance systems are not compatible with the social needs and the organization's sustainability and food security goals (De Schutter, 2014). Suchman (1995, p. 585) indicates that "frictions" among the legitimacies are "most likely to arise when larger social institutions either are poorly articulated with one another or are undergoing historical transitions." Thus, regulative legitimacy may not be a matter of catching up to social and environmental realities, but rather a matter of catching on to the "revolutionary approaches" (Foley et al., 2011) needed to address the social and environmental devastation of current food production.

Issues such as BSE in 1990s and the genetically modified food debate in Europe, have encouraged a cautious approach to food and feed legislation (Costa-Font, Gil, & Traill, 2008; Van der Spiegel et al., 2013). Yet meeting the climate targets set in 2°C as well as the EU food security aims will require innovation promotion and changes in current consumption and production habits (Bryngelsson, Wirsenius, Hedenus, & Sonesson, 2016; Candel, Brieman, Stiller, & Termeer, 2014; Maggio, Van Criekinge, & Malingreau, 2015). The interviews in this research revealed that sustainable farming is considered *the* way forward for the Netherlands, but the policy climate must support this goal in order to make it a reality. Commercial rearing of insects for use in food and feed may or may not prove to be a solution in the direction of more sustainable living. But if the results of this study are any indication, stakeholders and the public are increasingly supportive of research and innovation in the field of edible insects. The Dutch sector is employing legitimacy-seeking intraindustry and interindustry strategies to gain cognitive and sociopolitical legitimacy; now sustained focus must be placed on institutional strategies not only to further increase public support and secure favorable legislation, but to do so before legislative barriers send EU producers to other regions.

Concluding Remarks

The objective of this research was to explore the rise of the insect as food and feed sector in the Netherlands and determine how the sector has made cognitive and sociopolitical legitimacy gains. In the present stage of edible insect sector

development, producers are most focused on intraindustry and interindustry strategies geared toward developing reliability and reputation. Strengthening organizational ties within the sector and between sectors not only contributes to normative legitimacy by establishing a history of reliability and good reputation for the producers, but also it contributes to cognitive legitimacy in that collaboration furthers the dissemination of knowledge about the insect sector. Cognitive legitimacy has also been bolstered by increasing salience in newspaper attention to edible insects.

While the aim of this study has been achieved, there are some issues that might be addressed in future research. First, interviews with grocery retailers and NGOs would have been informative. The organizations that were contacted declined to be interviewed, however. Future studies might include a broader range of interview subjects. Second, an in-depth case study of one firm in the sector might provide a more detailed illustration of how organizations in emerging sectors implement specific strategies to gain legitimacy. Third, it would be useful to know whether the sequence of legitimation is industry-specific. For example, is the legitimacy sequence different for the food industry than the technology industry? Finally, an analysis of the relationship between ideas and institutions might shed light on the political, cultural, and institutional challenges that are invariably linked to food and feed initiatives.

The results here suggest that rearing insects for food and feed is gaining traction with national policy makers, business leaders, academic institutions, and the public in the Netherlands because it is perceived as a potential solution to economic, social, and environmental problems. A more concerted focus on institutional strategies such as coordinated marketing and lobbying - with emphasis on EU environmental and food security aims - may result in greater awareness of and support for innovation in insect protein by the European Commission.

Chapter 5

Let them eat bugs: Legitimacy and legislative priority in the Dutch edible insect sector

An adapted version of this chapter has been accepted as a chapter in the book *Nonmarket Strategic Management* (Routledge, 2017).

Abstract

Given the projections for future protein demand and the environmental consequences of current protein production, global policymakers must consider developing and promoting alternatives to current consumption and production habits. This research examines one such alternative – edible insects – and how institutional entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are trying to gain legitimacy and political priority for the sector. Based on 19 semi-structured interviews with actors and advocates in the edible insect sector, a deductive coding process, and the use of a policy framework informed by the legitimacy and institutional entrepreneurship literatures, the findings indicate a need for more professional coordination of sector proponents, greater civil society engagement, agreement on how to position the sector on a national and European scale, and scientific evidence of safe breeding and application.

Introduction

Current global food challenges include providing food for those in greatest need, sustainable production, and reconciling the supply of food with the demands of an increasingly wealthy population (Godfray et al., 2010). Similar concerns are voiced in *The Future of Food: Scenarios for 2050* in which the researchers indicate that the key issues involved in feeding the rising global population are food security, food safety, food and health, and sustainability (Hubert, Rosegrant, Van Boekel, & Ortiz, 2010). The authors report that the rising consumption of animal products due to population and economic growth will result in an increase in greenhouse gases and a strain on resources. They differentiate between the developing world and the developed world, stating that decreasing ruminant protein production and consumption in developing countries may not be desirable given the nutritional and economic necessity of ruminant production in very poor regions. In the developed world, however, alternatives to meat could play a role in reducing environmental degradation and use of resources.

As a source of protein, one of the alternatives to meat is insects. The advantages of breeding insects for protein over traditional ruminant breeding include more efficient conversion of feed to food (Van Huis, 2013), fewer greenhouse gas emissions and less land degradation (Oonincx & De Boer, 2012), and high mineral and element contents (Longvah, Mangthya, & Rumulu, 2011; Yang et al., 2014). In addition to their use in food and feed, insects may also be useful in waste management (Banks, Gibson, & Cameron, 2014; Yang et al., 2015) and medicine (Čeřovský & Bém, 2014; Costa-Neto, 2002).

Regarding concerns such as allergy, microbial, parasitical, and chemical hazards in the use of insects as food and feed, Belluco et al. (2013) found that if proper procedures are implemented, insects are a safe source of food. This is not unlike meat, fish, crustaceans, and other foodstuffs which must also meet hygiene, production, processing, storage, and distribution standards and be properly labeled regarding allergens. However, Eilenberg, Vlak, Nielsen-LeRoux, Cappellozza, and Jensen (2015) indicate that more research is needed on insect diseases, as well as diagnosis and control protocols.

Although many researchers and edible insect advocates are positive about the potential of insects to contribute to food security and environmental sustainability, European policymakers are taking a cautious approach, perhaps in part due to Western attitudes towards insects. Belluco et al. (2013, p. 309) maintain that because the science justifies "insect presence in the Western diet, the greatest obstacle to consumption remains the repulsion felt by Western people." DeFoliart (1999, p. 44) voiced a similar sentiment, indicating that more opportunities for research and production would be created if the "Western-driven stigma" against insects as food could be redressed.

Under current European Union (EU) regulations, producers may sell their insect products to hobby markets (reptiles, birds, etc.) and pet food suppliers. Insects and insect ingredients may not be sold as feed to livestock or on a large scale for human consumption. The sale of insects for human consumption is currently guided by Novel Food legislation which many scientists and producers consider a hindrance to growth of the industry and a barrier to the effort to solve global nutrition and food security issues (Belluco et al., 2013; IPIFF, 2015; Premalatha, Abbasi, Abbasi, & Abbasi, 2011).

One of the key questions for producers, researchers, and edible insect advocates is how to gain political priority for their issue at the EU in order to accelerate the legislation process so that the economic, social, and environmental benefits of the sector can be realized. Despite a growing number of producers worldwide, a significant increase in scholarly attention (Van Huis, 2015), and the establishment of a European lobby, advocates in the European Union indicate that the edible insect sector has had difficulty improving its legitimacy - roughly stated, its legal, social, and cultural acceptance (Suchman, 1995) - with EU policymakers.

All new organizations begin with a lack of legitimacy (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Stinchcombe, 1965), a situation that organizations can improve through strategic actions (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Kaganer, Pawlowski, & Wiley-Patton, 2010; Suchman, 1995; Westphal & Zajac, 1994). Suchman (1995) suggests three strategies for gaining legitimacy: conforming to environments, selecting among environments, and manipulating environments. Conformance involves adopting the legitimated structure and practices of existing institutions. Selecting among environments refers to choosing an environment more amenable to the firm. When conformance and selection are not options because an organization's activities do not correspond to existing social or legal structures, then an organization may choose manipulation as a strategy to accommodate its specific situation. Given the innovative nature of the edible insect industry and its challenge to cultural norms, this research focuses on manipulation strategies as a means to gain legitimacy. In order to revise legislation and current policies, the sector will need to increase its legitimacy with the public and policymaking institutions (Ju & Tang, 2011; Suchman, 1995; Van Werven, Bouwmeester, & Cornelissen, 2015). Gaining priority for an issue depends in large part on advocates' ability to "promulgate new explanations of social reality" and on "molding constituent tastes" (Suchman, 1995, p. 591).

In their research into the evolution of management consulting, David, Sine, and Haveman (2013) indicate that institutional entrepreneurs legitimated the new field by 1) identifying and publicizing problems in the current situation; 2) suggesting solutions based on accepted categories of expertise from other disciplines; 3) emphasizing community or society benefits and playing down the benefits to themselves; 4) establishing ties to legitimate actors outside the field such as experts, academic

institutions, and social elites, and; 5) working with other entrepreneurs in the same field to establish social and certification and a professional organization to define and defend their organizational form.

To date, little is known about the legitimation process of new organizational forms (David et al., 2013). This research thus contributes to the literature on emerging organizations by introducing a sector whose future is still uncertain and investigating in real-time its legitimation journey. Based on evidence from the edible insect sector in the Netherlands, the study shows how the combined application of the literature can aid in identifying perceived gaps in the edible insect sector's legitimation process and point to favorable courses of action. Our investigation focuses on how actors in the Dutch edible insect sector can gain attention for the sector and, more specifically, identifies the legitimacy strategy gaps in the edible insect sector as perceived by actors in the Dutch sector,

Analyzing the Dutch edible insect sector with the institutional entrepreneurship propositions in mind, combined with Suchman's typology and a political priority framework (Shiffman & Smith, 2007), will provide insight into the legitimation process of the sector. First, the literature on organizational legitimacy and institutional entrepreneurship will be consulted to help explain the institutional challenges facing the sector. Then background information on the Dutch insect sector will be provided, the framework and the method used to analyze gaps in the sector's legitimacy strategies will be described, and the results will be presented. Finally, the analysis will be discussed, and some concluding remarks will be offered.

Organizational Legitimacy

An organization gains legitimacy when its activities are deemed appropriate by stakeholders according to prevailing societal norms and values (Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy is sought because it allows an organization to "strengthen its support and secure its survival" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 349). Suchman identifies three types of legitimacy: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive. He explains that pragmatic legitimacy is conferred when constituents perceive an organization's activities as positively affecting their well-being. Whereas pragmatic legitimacy is based on self-interest, moral legitimacy is based on altruistic ideals (Suchman, 1995). Moral legitimacy is conferred when constituents perceive an organization as doing right by society and adhering to social norms and professional standards. Pragmatic and moral legitimacy reflect deliberate evaluation. Cognitive legitimacy, on the other hand, reflects the acceptance of an organization because its activities are needed and/or because for the organization not to exist would be unthinkable (Suchman, 1995). The organization fits into an established cultural framework, and this framework determines "what

types of actors are allowed to exist, what structural features they exhibit, what procedures they can follow, and what meanings are associated with these actions" (Ruef & Scott, 1998, p. 878).

As previously mentioned, Suchman (1995) explains that organizations in new sectors may improve their legitimacy through conformance, selection, and manipulation strategies. This research focuses on manipulation strategies due to the normative and cognitive challenges facing the edible insect sector. Manipulation strategies include mobilization of partners, strategic communication, "collective evangelism" to "build a winning coalition of believers" (Suchman, 1995, p. 592), demonstrating success, popularization through activities such as lobbying, events, and scientific research, and standardization through isomorphic coercion and industry codes and standards. Moral legitimacy is gained when these strategies succeed in convincing stakeholders that the activities of an organization or sector are socially desirable. Cognitive legitimacy is achieved when stakeholders understand these activities, make sense of them, and accept them as reality (Pollack, Rutherford, & Nagy, 2012; Shepherd & Zacharakis, 2003; Suchman, 1995).

Given the legitimating effects of public policy and regulation (Humphreys, 2010; Motion & Leitch, 2009), establishing strategies to improve social desirability and acceptance among policymakers can be imperative to success for emerging organizations. In other words, if the laws are favorable toward insect production and processing, the public will be more likely to accept the sector as well. For organizations – in this case, institutional entrepreneurs – attempting to introduce business practices, products, and/or principles that do not mesh with the existing institutional landscape, such strategies may not guarantee success but they might increase the odds.

Institutional Entrepreneurship

Borrowing from DiMaggio (1988), Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009) define institutional entrepreneurs "actors who initiate, and actively participate in the implementation of, changes that diverge from existing institutions" (p. 70). Tracey, Phillips, and Jarvis (2011) indicate that institutional entrepreneurship is a political process in which actors vie for power, in which symbols and language are used strategically to create new meaning, and which cannot succeed without legitimacy. The difference between an entrepreneur and an institutional entrepreneur is that the institutional entrepreneur proposes an innovative new business model that deviates from the institutional setting into which it is introduced (Battilana et al., 2009).

In their endeavor to create divergent change, institutional entrepreneurs must legitimate their ideas, reason for existence, and solutions to current problems - in terms of prevailing norms and values (David et al., 2013). For example, consumer

watchdog organizations described their reason for being as a response to product proliferation and misleading advertising (Rao, 1998); management consulting founders offered solutions to inefficient business practices (David et al., 2013); and the Canadian Treatment Advocates Council was framed as a solution to the fragmented, sometimes contentious groups of service organizations, coalitions, and activist organizations (Maguire, Hardy, & Lawrence, 2004). Although these represent successful cases of institutional entrepreneurship, Battilana et al. (2009) indicate that actors need not be successful in their attempt to create new organizations or managerial practices in order to be considered institutional entrepreneurs. According to Battilana et al. (2009), the ideas behind the undertaking and the act of harnessing the resources necessary to introduce the change are requirement enough to consider a new business model institutionally entrepreneurial. Whether the changes are adopted is not a condition of this designation. This is an important point when examining a sector whose success still hangs in the balance. In the case of the insect sector, a new business model is being introduced and resources have been mobilized, yet we do not know whether society will confer legitimacy upon the practice.

Drawing from the actions and activities of institutional entrepreneurs in the field of management consulting, David et al. (2013) concluded that successful institutional entrepreneurship is a result of effective theorization, affiliation, and collective action. Theorization refers to identifying problems with the current system, communicating novel solutions that involve established fields of expertise, and voicing the innovation's benefit to society rather than to the entrepreneur. Affiliation refers to contact with experts from other fields, authorities, important institutions, and elites. Collective action involves the creation of new professional associations and establishing social codes. The study by David and his colleagues revealed a specific order to this process as well. Collective action only began after the problems had been identified, solutions offered, and affiliations with social elites and credible institutions had been established. They also indicate that "the founders of the earliest consulting firms used social skills to legitimate their new organizational form" (David et al., 2013, p. 371). These skills will be important to the edible insect sector as well.

The Dutch Edible Insect Sector

The key actors involved in the Dutch edible insect sector currently include nine main insect breeders/producers rearing mainly mealworms, black soldier flies, crickets, and grasshoppers; researchers from Wageningen University, HAS University of Applied Sciences, and Maastricht University; industry consultants/advocates; feed industry experts, pet food suppliers, automation specialists, private investors, and government representatives. Supermarkets and NGOs are not yet playing a large,

active role in the sector. Wholesale grocers Hanos and Sligro has offered insects such as grasshoppers and mealworms; the family-owned supermarket chain Jumbo has put insect burgers and nuggets on their shelves country-wide; and Albert Heijn, Plus, and EMTE have sold insect products in select stores. These organizations are not currently at the forefront of the sector promotion, however. According to a Dutch television program, Dutch consumers are still wary of eating insects and insect products ("Eten van Morgen," 2016).

Some of the main edible insect producers in the Netherlands are Protix (established in 2009), Kreca/Proti-Farm (established in 1978), Van de Ven (breeding insects since 1999), Meertens (established in 2002), and Vivara (insect breeding activity established in 2011) in a market that is predicted to be worth Euros 320 million in Europe in the next 10-15 years ("Europe: Market," 2014). Globally, the sector is growing as well with breeders and processing facilities in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. Some of the major players in the global sector are AgriProtein (South Africa), Enterra (Canada), Enviroflight (US), Hermetia (Germany), and Ynsect (France). This list is not exhaustive, but it provides an indication of how international the sector has become. Additionally, processing companies, such as those producing cricket flour and snack products containing insect-derived ingredients, are also becoming more prevalent worldwide. Some of the more popular or well-known products include Chirps cricket flour chips by Six Foods, cricket flour bars by Exo, Crobar energy bars by Gathr, and snack bars by Chapul, to name a few. Insects are already consumed in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, but they are less common as a food source in the West.

Scientific studies on insects for food and feed rose significantly from 2000-2010 (Van Huis, 2015). Not only has the scientific literature on the subject increased, but also mainstream press has reported on the potential of edible insects as a sustainable source of protein in recent years (Borel, 2015; Ligman, 2015; McCausland, 2015; Tarken, 2015). Given that popular magazines seek to capture the attention of a general readership by publishing what is deemed newsworthy at a given point in time and that competition for attention is high (Usdansky, 2008), their coverage of the edible insect sector is significant. However, while academic study of particular fields is less sensitive to trending issues, coverage in popular magazines may reflect fads and short-term interests (Usdansky, 2008). Although it is too early to say whether edible insects are a fad or will become a full-fledged industry, their potential benefits are being discussed at various levels of society.

Although the momentum in support of the edible insect sector is growing (Van Huis, 2015), current EU legislation prohibits large-scale commercial production and processing of insects for use in food or livestock feed. Insects as novel foods are allowed for human consumption. However, legislation surrounding edible insects remains ambiguous: "There is, however, legal uncertainty as to whether 'whole insects & their

preparations' are covered by the EU legislation which results in diverging interpretations from one Member state to another" (IPIFF, 2015, p. 2). Advocates also maintain that the greatest benefits of insect protein - food security and sustainability - can only be realized once insects have been approved for human and livestock consumption. IPIFF indicates that current EU Novel Foods legislation is cumbersome, expensive, and threatens to stifle sector growth and development (IPIFF, 2015).

One of the goals of the Dutch edible insect sector is to gain legislative clarification and more influence at the policy table at the EU level. Understanding the political terrain in advance as well as how to frame solutions will be critical for edible insect advocates (David et al., 2013; Pollack et al., 2012). Locating gaps in policy focus and knowing which strategies the sector can employ to obtain more legislative attention to the issue of edible insects would go a long way toward this effort (Shiffman & Smith, 2007; Suchman, 1995).

Identifying Gaps

One way to locate the gaps in policy focus is the use of a framework. The Shiffman and Smith (2007) framework is employed here because it incorporates concepts common to institutional entrepreneurship (David et al., 2013) and because the intended result of the suggested activities is ultimately legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). (See Table 1 for a synthesis of the main concepts from Shiffman and Smith (2007), David et al., (2013), and Suchman (1995), and their relationship to one another in the context of this study.)

Shiffman and Smith (2007) indicate that an issue has gained attention when political leaders show sustained, widespread public support for it; policies are put into place as a response; and resources necessary to address the issue are allocated to it. We believe this framework can also be useful in investigating the edible insect sector's attempt at securing space on the policy agenda given the sector's potential to reduce an impending protein shortage, contribute to food security, and decrease the environmental impact of protein production. The framework is outlined below with an explanation of how it was used to categorize actor responses and provide insight into the legitimacy of the edible insect sector. We do not equate political priority with legitimacy. Rather, we hold that the categories and factors described by Shiffman and Smith are legitimating activities that serve to increase political priority.

Shiffman and Smith's (2007) policy framework consists of four categories: Ideas, Political Contexts, Issue Characteristics, and Actor Power. The authors indicate that when an initiative combines elements of each category, it is more likely to gain support at a policy level. Although Shiffman and Smith begin their explanation of the framework with actor power, they do not indicate a particular order of analysis. This

Table 1 Connecting the Literatures: Institutional Entrepreneurship, Legitimacy, and Policy Influence.

Action of Institutional Entrepreneur (David et al., 2013)	*through…*	**Legitimacy Strategy Employed** and legitimacy goal (Suchman, 1995)	*with the goal of…*	**Policy Influence Goal** (Shiffman & Smith, 2007)
Communicate salient contradictions to status quo; offer solutions that de-emphasize self-interest; create distinctiveness through collective action	→	Strategic communication and evangelism (pragmatic, moral)	→	Establishing internal frame; establishing external frame - public portrayal (IDEAS)
Collaboration; base solutions on accepted categories of expertise	→	Popularization: storytelling in the form of lobbying, advertising, event sponsorship (moral, cognitive)	→	Taking advantage of policy windows; working within governance structures and practices (POLITICAL CONTEXT)
Affiliate with recognized institutions and involve them in solutions	→	Scientific research and lobbying; evidence-based solutions (moral)	→	Promoting an issue (ISSUE CHARACTERISTICS)
Develop ties to external authorities and social elites; establish new standards	→	Mobilization of partners (pragmatic, moral); standardization through coercion and regulation (cognitive)	→	Building proponent strength (ACTOR POWER)

study will thus begin its analysis and presentation of the results with Ideas because this provides the reader with a clear picture of the issue before moving on to the specific subjects of Political Contexts, Issue Characteristics, and Actor Power.

Ideas concerns the way an issue is framed internally and externally – at policy and public levels. Food security, land degradation, and greenhouse gases, for example, are frames that resonate with different policy makers depending on their position and department. The challenge is to develop a "common understanding" (Shiffman & Smith, 2007, p. 1372) of edible insects that resonates at various levels. With regard to the external frame, when an issue frame resonates with the public, it serves to mobilize powerful organizations and supporters, and increase access to resources. Analyzing this element considers public perception and levels of interest in the edible insect issue. Agreement on how to position the sector and/or agreement on how to pursue public framing of edible insects are key considerations. This corresponds to Suchman's (1995) manipulation strategies of strategic communication and collective evangelism, and to David et al.'s (2013) findings that successful institutional entrepreneurs communicate contradictions to the status quo and present solutions that convey an altruistic motivation. The *Political Contexts* element involves being aware of policy windows and global governance structures. Shiffman and Smith (2007) indicate that advocates of a particular initiative "might have little control over these contextual factors, but they should take them into account if they wish to develop effective strategies" (p. 1372). The publication of a book on insects as food and feed just and conference sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), for example, may present policy windows around which advocates may strategically exploit in their endeavor to gain attention for the issue. They may do so by riding the wave of these events to popularize their existence through advertising, lobbying, and event sponsorship, for example (Suchman, 1995). With regard to governance structures, understanding the institutional environment not only for food, but also environment and health, for instance, may be important in framing, timing, and lobbying efforts. Framing new solutions within accepted institutional categories serves to increase legitimacy (David et al., 2013). In addition, knowledge of the broader context denotes preparedness which can increase cognitive legitimacy (Chen, Yao, & Kotha, 2009; Pollack et al., 2012).

Issue Characteristics include the ability to measure a problem, the problem's severity, and the availability of solutions. In the context of edible insects, the problems to be measured would be the social, environmental, and economic consequences associated with traditional protein production; future population and protein requirement projections; and dependence on unsustainably-produced feed from other regions. Legitimacy is enhanced through scientific research and lobbying (Suchman, 1995), especially when recognized institutions are made part of the problem resolution process (David et al., 2013).

Actor Power refers to the participants in the field and their strength both individually and collectively. This includes insect producers to lead the issue forward; the Triple Helix networks between policy makers, entrepreneurs, and educational institutes; inter-industry and intra-industry network organizations, and civil society involvement. Actor power corresponds to Suchman's (1995) manipulation strategy of mobilization of partners, and David et al.'s (2013) concepts of developing ties with influential parties and establishing new industry standards.

Methods

Qualitative research lends itself well to studies which require a thorough examination of the context "and perceptions of local actors 'from the inside'" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 6). Because the edible insect sector is still emerging and little research has been conducted from an organizational perspective, it is not a well-understood manifestation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), qualitative data is particularly well-suited to discovery and exploration of new areas. Given this and that Maguire et al. (2004, p. 660) also argue that "understanding institutional entrepreneurship demands rich, detailed interpretive analysis that takes into account the characteristics of the particular context in which it occurs," a qualitative research method was selected for this study.

A total of 19 semi-structured interviews with actors in the edible insect sector in the Netherlands were conducted between April 2015 and January 2016. Interviewees were identified through purposive and snowball sampling, representing interests in various parts of the sector ranging from breeders to industry experts to researchers. The interviews were conducted in Dutch or English, according to interviewee preference. Each interview lasted between 30-87 minutes and was recorded and fully transcribed. Table 2 lists the interview participants by sector.

The interviews were coded into themes by the first author, and analysis of the coding was conducted independently by two of the researchers. To determine the reliability of the coding system, one of the co-authors analyzed the first-order codes with little prior instruction and no discussion in order to achieve the most objective results. Interrater agreement was 72% and kappa was .66 which qualifies as "good" (Bakeman & Gottman, 1986). Differences in the coding were then discussed and final codes were agreend upon. The first coding scheme allowed us to determine the key themes expressed in the interviews and which interviewees commented on which specific themes. For example, using this coding scheme it was possible to see how many interviewees talked about the need for more cooperation among producers or the need for a communication strategy.

Table 2 Interviewees.

Sector	Number of Participants
Automation	1
Banking	1
Education/Research	3
Government (local/provincial)	2
EU Parliamentarian	1
Feed	2
Food	1
Industry Expert	2
Innovation Consultant	1
Insect Producer/Breeder	3
Livestock	2

The second part of the analysis involved text selection. Following a deductive approach, the first researcher conducted an initial selection of content from the interviews using the Shiffman and Smith framework (2007). The other two researchers in the study then independently assigned the texts to one of the four categories. Upon comparison of the coded texts, there was only one disagreement on category placement and this was due to overlap across the themes. The overlap was discussed and placement was agreed upon. Below is a discussion of the interview responses as analyzed using Shiffman and Smith's (2007) four-category framework: ideas, political contexts, issue characteristics, and actor power.

Results

Ideas

The way that insects for food and feed is framed is critical to support for the sector. There appears to be some friction within the sector as to how to best define and portray sector activities – for example, as food, feed, or a waste management solution. Some of the actors want to emphasize the use of insects for food, while others believe that a focus on food will spell the demise of the sector. One interviewee was adamant that the sector should not focus on insects as food at this time:

> "One of the threats is all of the clips that [show that] you have to eat insects. That's why we don't want it. Yuck! … We have to stop [publicizing] Marcel Dicke's

> cookbooks and begin with worms for chickens. You know what I mean? That's what we have to do. We have to stop communicating that we all have to eat snails – we have to stop that – or worms or insects in whatever context. A fly is something you swat. Agreed? We find them annoying … and that image is only amplified if we talk about black soldier fly production."
> [Industry Expert 1]

Others suggest positioning the sector as a solution to environmental issues and/or as a feed alternative. Advocates of a nudging approach that begins with animal protein as an ingredient in feed and/or food state that advertising human consumption of whole insects is not the appropriate strategy in Europe:

> "I don't think people want to eat insects. I think you have to process them into flour."
> [Innovation Consultant]

Some suggest focusing on the sustainability approach - specifically, the use of waste streams as insect feed - while others state that the waste stream argument neither adds value nor will it resonate with consumers and policymakers at this time, and that the focus must be health benefits. Compare these two approaches:

> "The moment you can show it's sustainable, you're using waste products, you need less land, it's an efficient way to convert feed,and so forth, that is how you can develop a good communication plan especially directed at authorities, at interest groups."
> [Feed Industry Expert 2]

> "In this phase you should not be talking about converting manure to protein. That will not achieve the objective. It is not a benefit at this point. The benefit is an alternative protein that is good for you and helps toward realizing food security."
> [Producer 2]

Some experts fear that disagreement on a strategic communication could pose a threat to the sector, while others suggest that the main problem may be allowing the sector time to introduce the products systematically. The excerpts below represent each of these viewpoints:

> "The threat is that it ends up with the wrong image, and that it's poorly promoted …"
> [Producer 1]

> "The biggest threat is trying to grow too quickly. A push strategy invites resistance. Nobody knows yet what it is. The product has to do the work."
> [Feed Industry Expert 2]

According to the European Parliamentarian, at the time of the interview, none of the views was resonating at the EU policy level: "I think in the European Parliament it's really, really new. We once had a debate where it was raised but until now, to be honest, I think the issue is mainly raising eyebrows and people are laughing a bit about it." Positioning and framing of sector activities to achieve recognition is thus vital.

The positioning of the sector is important, but so too is the way that producers - and those who stand to profit from the sector - communicate their role. One interviewee articulated his motivation thusly:

> "I don't want the oceans to be overfished, and I want the lands to be restored for biodiversity in nature. I think nature is the most important thing there is."
> [Producer 2]

In sum, at the time of the interviews, there was no agreement among Dutch actors in the sector with regard to communicating motivation. Interestingly, however, all of the interviewees contended that more cooperation among producers will be essential to sector development and progress.

Political Contexts

Political environment, context, governance structures, and global events can all influence the way that an issue is interpreted and received by policymakers. One of the interviewees indicated the importance of events and/or timing in gaining political attention to an issue:

> "Usually it works when different issues come together at the same time. I think on this issue it would be important that at a certain moment you also get a bit of agriculture lobby paying attention to this topic. Then, you know, if more parties are starting to push for it, then it can gain momentum."
> [European Parliamentarian]

Another interviewee [Researcher 3] indicated that the book published by the FAO in 2013 entitled *Edible Insects: Future Prospects for Food and Feed Security* was a critical point in gaining recognition for the advantages of edible insects as a protein alternative. Two interviewees mentioned Protix's World Economic Forum award in 2015 as an important event and recognition for all insect producers. Four interviewees

also expect changes in laws in other countries to affect EU regulations. One interviewee expects changing legislation in other countries to influence policy in Europe:

> "I expect that it [legislation] will get easier in the coming years partly due to pressure from other countries. If America and other countries allow it [edible insect production], then it will happen here as well."
> [Producer 1]

This is not a given, however; the genetically modified organism (GMO) debate is just one example of how an issue can be interpreted and framed differently across regions and thus influence legislation. Yet legislation in countries outside the EU favorable to the commercial production of insects for food and feed could provide a policy window from which Dutch and other European edible insect advocates might be able to benefit.

Interviewees also provided structural and political reasons for the lack of priority given to the insect sector. These include legislative barriers in the EU as a result of the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis, competing political interests, and balancing existing food production and environmental policies within the EU. One interviewee indicated that supermarkets are afraid of BSE; another stated that the soy lobby in the established feed industry is not interested in changes to the status quo; and another suggested that a focus on sustainability going forward will be necessary to get the EU's attention. These viewpoints are expressed below:

> "It's actually the supermarkets that are saying, 'That problem with BSE, we don't want that anymore so no more animal products in livestock feed.' And that was the basis for European policy… and that policy was never intended for insects, but changing this legislation is not easy.
> [Feed Industry Expert 2]

> "It's a very political climate; that's very much a part of it…
> The new FAO Secretary-General is from Brazil and the soy lobby called him and said, 'What in God's name are you doing with insects?'"
> [Industry Expert 2]

> "Look, in my opinion this is more about sustainability and that sort of thing than about how it's achieved … If we want this then we have to lobby to see if we can make that connection in Brussels."
> [Provincial Government Representative]

The European Parliamentarian interviewed indicated that the majority of policymakers in Brussels are not aware of insects as an alternative protein. IPIFF was established to increase both awareness at a policy level as well as lobby for more accommodating legislation to allow the sector to innovate and develop. Challenges on a political level will be existing legislation, embedded values attached to that legislation, securing endorsement from influential organizations, and possible opposition by powerful industries.

Issue Characteristics

Issue characteristics describe the problems being faced, indicate the extent of the problems, and outline solutions. Credible studies and evidence are also important to substantiate these claims. The interviewees in this study maintained that an edible insect sector could help resolve problems pertaining to a declining agro-food sector in the Netherlands, increasing European dependence on foreign soybeans, and nutrition.

> "People are looking for new business models for the region. Insect breeding could be one of them."
> [Producer 3]

> "If the cost [to produce] decreases, then legislation will come. I'm almost certain of it. Look, there's a geopolitical argument here. If Europe wants to be less dependent on soy imports - the amount coming from Brazil and South America is gigantic - then there's a geopolitical argument there. So if you're prepared to offer an animal protein alternative for the feed industry, you might be able to exploit the geopolitical issue."
> [Food Industry Expert]

> "Let's take soybean meal and fishmeal which are two other protein sources. I think there are sufficient reasons to doubt whether soybean is the way to go. There are problems there. And I'm not saying that there aren't problems with insects, but maybe we can work together to provide sufficient protein to last. If you look at fishmeal, then fish stocks are simply declining so we need to put in more effort to get out less fish so in the end you will need an alternative there as well."
> [Researcher 2]

> "One of the tasks of national government, if they think this is an innovative path, is that we must research it. If you look at Louisa Fresco

> who worked at the FAO and who now leads the WUR [Wageningen University], she has clearly stated that insects are a solution for our future, for our diet." [Local Government Representative]

Scientific validation and indicators of food and health safety will be imperative to gaining attention for the sector at the policy level. The interviewees are aware of the need for testing and industry codes:

> "You need to have your claims independently validated [by research]. You need that proof … That is also just part of developing a sector." [Industry Consultant]

> "I think whenever you have a new food source… you always need independent, scientific advice … If it's about public acceptance, then it's scientific, but it seems to me there is also an inherently political side to it." [Local Government Representative]

> "As soon as you enter the feed or food market, you must be aware that it's a completely different playing field and that food safety can be ensured because before you know it, you're involved in a scandal and that could be very damaging to the sector. We need to be prepared for that … That's why I'm an enormous supporter of establishing a hygiene code. There's some resistance to it, but it's going to happen. Very important. [Producer 3]

> "The biggest threat is the sensitivity to producing [insects] *en masse*." [Innovation Consultant]

> "Research has to take place… fundamental research, of course mainly in Wageningen, I think, but that has to happen. And at the applied universities in the form of practice-based research: How do we get that critter in the hamburger?" [Higher Education Expert]

In short, the interview participants indicated that the concept of edible insects as a solution to problems needs to be more explicitly communicated. Additional scientific evidence must also be provided to confirm food safety, public safety, health, and environmental claims. Moreover, given that food and protein shortage is not a currently a threat to Europe, the advantages of edible insects both at home and globally must be clearly delineated in comprehensible proposals supported by scientific evidence.

Actor Power

Interview participants stated that one of the biggest challenges for leadership in the sector is cooperation and cohesion. There is still considerable rivalry among producers, and no clear leader for the sector has emerged. Seven of the interviewees indicated that a lack of cohesion could pose a threat to the sector, and eight called for more cooperation among producers. One interviewee put it this way:

> "Look, you can breed as many insects as you want but if you don't, if you can make a commercial chain in which you work together to develop marketing concepts and share the risk, then it's going to be very difficult."
> [Provincial Government Representative]

Another interview was a bit more terse about the rivalry in the business:

> "They aren't cooperators because they're too afraid that someone is going to walk away with their idea."
> [Livestock Industry Expert 1]

The need for ambassadors or champions of the cause was also identified. Five interviewees mentioned possible names for the ambassadors, but thus far nobody has been approached to be a spokesperson or representative for the sector. Two interviewees articulated the need for an ambassador as follows:

> "The most important players are the people who are calling for more protein. The Louisa Frescos [former Assistant Director-General, FAO; currently President of the Executive Board of Wageningen University] … the people who indicate how important protein is for your health … So it is communicated via ambassadors, not scientific stuff - you also need that … but you make sure that the ambassadors are the ones who communicate it."
> [Industry Expert 1]

> "We know that Sharon Dijksma [then Dutch Secretary of Economic Affairs] … is positive about this and is also willing to discuss this with her colleagues in neighboring countries …"
> [Local Government Representative]

Support from existing institutions will also be key in gaining policymaker attention. To date, institutional support for insects has come from universities and the FAO. The FAO published a book on edible insects, and Wageningen co-hosted the first

annual Insects as Food and Feed conference together with the FAO in Ede, The Netherlands in May 2014. One interviewee emphasized the importance of support from the FAO in the following statement:

> "So because FAO did it that made an enormous difference … in the case that the UN indicates something, then everybody's listening. I mean, that is really a difference. Because then it's serious. Then it becomes a possibility. Like before, it was considered, 'Ah, you know, those stupid people in the tropics, they eat insects because they have nothing else to eat.' You know, those kinds of misconceptions. And I think now that really got a, yeah, it was approached from a different angle."
> [Researcher 1]

Venik (the association of Dutch insect breeders) and IPIFF (the International Platform for Insects as Food and Feed) are the trade organizations lobbying for support at national and EU levels. Seven interviewees indicated a need for more professionalism in the sector. One interviewee described the situation as follows:

> "If we look at IPIFF right now, then that's, I would consider that a more professional organization than Venik, and I could imagine that in five years from now, I will consider that as a group of serious producers that cleared the road in order for insects to be used as feed. But of course I [will] only know that in five years and not now because we're still waiting for that moment to happen."
> [Researcher 2]

According to the interviews, civil society is not greatly involved in the sector. One interviewee indicated that NGOs have played an important role in consumer awareness of food issues. This is important, he stated, because consumers influence policy. Some interviewees suggested that NGOs could pose a threat, while others indicated that the organizations will likely support sector development. The World Wildlife Fund is working with one of the Dutch producers who stated "They are part of [our organization]," but this is the only NGO that was mentioned during the interviews. Thus far, there is not a coalition or a drive from environmental or other civil society organizations to lobby for support of insects as an alternative protein source (or against) as far as any of the interview participants were aware. Concerning animal welfare, one might expect animal protection or other organizations to take a position on edible insects. However, the interview participants were unaware of any organizations against the use of insects for food and feed. The importance of working with NGOs was expressed as follows:

> "It's very important to work together with universities or large supermarket chains or NGOs so that you create a feeling of 'Hey, they're working on something that is going to be food for the future' and that it doesn't become a black box that nobody understands and therefore develops a negative image."
> [Bank Director]

> "I think it's incredibly important to establish good communication [with NGOs] because we have the Animal Rights Party here and they haven't yet discovered the insects, but they are also animals and I think that it's essential from the beginning to be aware of how this is communicated externally …"
> [Feed Industry Expert1]

> "I saw what happened [in intensive livestock farming], and that you can go too far. If you keep that in mind and make sure that you intervene before that happens and that you do so in a responsible way - better yet, *with* animal rights organizations in advance - and approach it that way, yeah, I think that there, I don't think they will have a choice but to support the sector that is producing in a responsible way. But then you have to want to have the dialogue, in advance, and learn from the past and also learn what happened in other sectors."
> [Producer 3]

In brief, organizational rivalry is still an obstacle. In addition, there appear to be champions for the edible insect sector, but their support is not yet a coordinated effort. The FAO has published a book, conferences are being co-hosted, and Dutch officials are voicing support, but ambassadors have not yet been designated by sector actors. In addition, the effort toward getting edible insects on the EU agenda is currently being led by entrepreneurs with both ideological and commercial interests, but competition among them appears to be hampering their efforts at mobilization. Furthermore, there appears to be little contact with civil society at this time to either mobilize support and/or discuss possible concerns and problems before they arise.

Discussion

The emergence of the edible insect sector in the Netherlands is the result of declining agro-food industry in the country and the promise of a new business model, concerns about global protein shortage in the future, and the need for more sustainable food production practices. The sector is new terrain for European policymakers, and some experts have indicated that public opinion and legislation in the West have not caught up with science and necessity (Belluco et al., 2013; DeFoliart, 1999; Premalatha et al., 2011). Actors involved in the sector were interviewed to gain more insight as to why this is the case. Their responses were analyzed using the Shiffman and Smith (2007) political priority framework in order to identify the perceived gaps in the legitimacy strategies of the Dutch edible insect sector.

The link between the Shiffman and Smith (2007) framework and legitimacy was made using Suchman's (1995) legitimacy typology and David et al.'s (2013) analysis of the legitimation process for institutional entrepreneurs. Suchman (1995) indicates that in order for organizations that challenge existing cultural beliefs to gain legitimacy, they may employ manipulation strategies to "develop bases of support" (p. 591). Citing a lack of research in institutional entrepreneurship, Suchman does not go into detail regarding the specific strategies. David et al. (2013) provided the needed elaboration.

The edible insect sector is seeking to increase its legitimacy with European policymakers. In order to do so, it must first be determined where the greatest strategy gaps are and how they might be filled. By employing a framework especially designed to analyze political priority by assessing ideas, political context, issue characteristics, and actor power, we were able to determine where and how the sector could better position itself to gain support and improve its pragmatic, moral, and cognitive legitimacy. Recall that pragmatic legitimacy refers to evaluation based on constituent self-interest, moral legitimacy involves social desirability, and cognitive legitimacy involves making sense of, understanding, and accepting activities as social reality (Suchman, 1995). The framework helped identify ways to increase all three types.

First, the findings revealed that more coordinated collaboration within the policy community could serve the sector well. Institutional linkages confer legitimacy (Baum & Oliver, 1991; David et al., 2013; Motion & Leitch, 2009). Formalizing support from influential ambassadors or champions of the sector in government or academia and coordinating that support with proponents from other institutions such as the FAO may increase actor power in the sector. Additionally, partnerships with NGOs not only lend legitimacy, but can also raise awareness of changes in public attitudes, increase access to other networks and information, and offer expertise (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). Actor power in the edible insect sector could thus be improved through more professional coordination of the policy community network and greater civil society engagement.

Second, the sector lacks agreement on what its position is in the market and how to communicate its alternatives to the status quo. Consensus can increase perceptions of reliability (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; David et al., 2013). The professional associations IPIFF and Venik are working toward more consensus, but competition among producers in the Dutch market is still hindering collective efforts. Given that cohesive professional organizations lend both normative and cognitive legitimacy to a sector (Greenwood et al., 2002), more coordinated and professional collective action could significantly benefit the sector's legitimation efforts. As institutional entrepreneurs, the producers must "legitimate the theory and values underpinning their ventures" (David et al., 2013, p. 358).

Members of the Dutch edible insect sector are also not in agreement how to frame their activities externally. This is problematic because policymakers in control of resources confer legitimacy on organizations that are understandable and fit into an "archetype" (Golant & Sillince, 2007, p. 1152). Disagreement among sector participants on how to frame the sector and "justify new social arrangements" (David et al., 2013, p. 359) not only jeopardizes further collaboration (Gray, 2004), but also fragmentation among internal stakeholders precludes confidence in the sector by external stakeholders (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). As Shiffman and Smith (2007) indicate, the way the issue is framed may depend on the audience. However, conveying a sector-wide altruistic motivation - whether sincere or strategic - should be a central theme across the board (David et al., 2013).

Third, how sector activities are framed as solutions to economic, social, and environmental problems is key to external stakeholder understanding, but these activities and solutions must also be substantiated by independent scientific research, objective measures, and evidenced-based proposals (Shiffman & Smith, 2007). If the issues surrounding the future of food are food security, food safety, food and health, and sustainability, then the sector should be prepared to address each issue and provide data and documentation as to how edible insects can play a part in resolving them. Moreover, In the case of the insect sector, it is affiliated with credible institutions such as Wageningen University and HAS, for example, yet there is little movement within the Dutch sector to coordinate efforts to compile evidence and diffuse knowledge (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). Although David et al. (2013, p. 360) indicate that affiliation can substitute for performance data, we believe this is specific to particular industries and may not be applicable to organizational forms involved in food production and processing.

Fourth, although the edible insect sector advocates may have little influence over the larger political context in which it is operating (Shiffman & Smith, 2007), knowledge of the existing institutional environment could be vital to the success of strategies pursued with regard to actor power, ideas, and issue characteristics. Moreover, familiarity with feed, food, and environmental policies; understanding the various

governance structures at the EU; and awareness of potential policy windows, may not only inform decision-making with regard to legitimacy strategies at all levels, but it also signals a level of preparedness to external stakeholders that serves to increase cognitive legitimacy (Chen et al., 2009; Pollack et al., 2012).

Finally, Suchman (1995) holds that organizations can either choose a strategy of popularization in which legitimacy is obtained through the proliferation of accounts of sector activities or standardization which refers to a large number of organizations adopting a similar form (i.e., density and isomorphism) and developing industry codes. We suggest that the edible insect sector pursue a combination of both strategies. On the one hand, because insects as food and feed is contrary to existing cultural norms, the sector will seek to alter these norms and demonstrate the reality of its solution to social, environmental, and economic problems. On the other hand, insects in food and feed present a risk, increasing the pressure on the sector to show accountability and reliability (Hannan & Freeman, 1984). In doing so, the sector will conform to accepted methods of testing, standard setting, and compliance in existing fields such as animal rearing, slaughtering, and feed and food processing (Kaganer et al., 2010). Rhetoric can build and improve legitimacy, but technical merit is imperative to maintaining it (Zbaracki, 1998). The edible insect industry can benefit from the current discussion on sustainable production practices and food security issues while also emphasizing its commitment to following established safety and hygiene practices. As David et al. (2013, p. 360) more eloquently put it, "the work of institutional entrepreneurs consists not only of navigating logics prevailing in established fields and organizations but also piggybacking on broader cultural schemas."

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the edible insect sector may increase its legitimacy with EU policymakers through more professional coordination of policy community proponents, greater civil society engagement, agreement on how to frame the problems and solutions as well as a communication strategy for the sector on a national and European scale, and scientific evidence of safe breeding and application. Implementing these strategies may result in greater priority for the sector to help it achieve its economic, social, and environmental goals. In short, strategic use of their "social skills" will be necessary for insect producers and other sector actors to "seize the opportunities created by changes" (David et al., 2013, p. 371) in policies regarding food security and sustainability (e.g., EC 2011, Europe 2020) as well as social attitudes toward food production and consumption.

Although the study responded to the research question, we are aware of its limitations. A larger group of interview participants may have provided more varied

insights into the sector and the gaps in legitimation strategies. This research also focuses on the Dutch sector; inclusion of other European stakeholders may have provided a broader view of sector activities. Finally, a framework intended for larger global initiatives was used. While it may be argued that the edible insect sector does not represent such an initiative, we believe that the Shiffman and Smith (2007) framework – supported by the legitimacy and institutional entrepreneur literature (i.e., Suchman, 1995 and David et al., 2013) - was an appropriate tool to analyze the data given the sector's goals with regard to food security and sustainable food production. Future research might test this assertion.

Another interesting study might be to analyze the edible insect sector in relation to the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). As we prepare to feed a growing population and simultaneously aim to change our production and consumption habits, one would expect these changes to be reflected in CAP. It might also be worthwhile to analyze how new ways of producing and distributing protein fit into current EU policy with regard to responsible business practices and whether and where discrepancies between various institutional policies exist. Given that it is still too early to predict whether institutional entrepreneurs in the Dutch edible insect sector will succeed in their quest for legitimacy, a follow-up study might continue to trace the legitimation process and the fate of this industry.

Chapter 6

Discussion and Conclusion

General Discussion and Conclusion

Organizational legitimacy is in essence a license for organizations to operate. In order to obtain that license, organizations must be perceived by audiences as adhering to social and cultural norms, rules, and beliefs. Once the license to operate has been obtained, organizations must continue to convince audiences that they are deserving of it. Like other licenses, it must be updated and maintained, and can be lost if the license holder does not adhere to the past or present conditions upon which it has been granted. The aim of this dissertation was to gain more insight into the process through which the license to operate for a sector emerges, evolves, and becomes ingrained. In order to do so, the legitimation processes of existing and emerging organizations were investigated.

Summary of Main Findings

The Legitimation of the NGO Sector as depicted in the Media

Cognitive legitimacy has long been explained as a function of organizational density (Carroll & Hannan, 1989; Hannan et al., 1995). However, density alone cannot predict cognitive legitimacy; identity also plays a vital part in whether organizations achieve comprehensible or taken-for-granted status (McKendrick & Carroll, 2001; McKendrick et al., 2003). Categories and labels are critical to establishing identity. The label "non-governmental organization" served to make NGOs more recognizable as a sector rather than as individual advocacy or humanitarian organizations. Additionally, although the term nongovernmental organization has remained the same, cognitive perception of nongovernmental organizations has changed over time, a change that has been reflected in the media.

This study in Chapter 2 showed how the frames in newspaper media reflected the NGO legitimation process and the industry's transition - as perceived through the media - from protectors to partners to policymakers to providers of aid. The research also found that as a sector, NGOs achieved taken-for-granted status in the mid-1990s.

Legitimacy as Expressed through Themes in Academic Discourse on Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs)

Previous studies have analyzed isomorphism in NPOs (Claeyé & Jackson, 2012; Verbruggen et al., 2011) and have shown that nonprofit organizations have adopted the language of their business and government counterparts (Dart, 2004; Laasonen et al., 2012). However, few have analyzed the thematic development of the research on NPOs from a language perspective. Because researchers are part of the professionalization debate (Eikenberry, 2009; Fairclough, 1993; Van Dijk, 2006) and because language

plays an important role in organizational and social transformation (Korff et al., 2015; Laasonen et al., 2012; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Oakes et al., 1998), studying the language that scholars use can inform us about academia's role in the professionalization process. While the study in Chapter 3 does not measure that role or engage in normative judgment as to the advantages or disadvantages of such a development, it is a step in identifying the pervasiveness of a dominant discourse. The main findings of the study here include a thematic account of the research on NPOs in three top-tier specialty journals over the last two decades and isomorphic adoption of a performance lexicon focused on outcomes, efficiency, and accountability. Though it might be argued that this language represents the NPO experience and that scholars are merely reporting what they observe, such an argument discounts the researcher's role in the development of the organizational fields under analysis and assumes a neutral role of the language they use.

After analyzing legitimacy from the outside looking in - through the media and academic journals in the first two studies– legitimacy was examined from the inside looking out - through the perceptions of organizational actors in an emerging sector in the last two studies.

The Legitimacy Strategy Process of the Edible Insect Sector in the Netherlands

All organizations begin with a liability-of-newness (Stinchcombe; 1965; Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). In the case of the edible insects, the sector's liability of newness also includes a cognitive "yuck factor": in most parts of the Western world, we cannot make sense of eating insects. From a regulative standpoint, rearing insects for large-scale human consumption is not allowed; from a normative perspective, eating insects is not appropriate; and from a cognitive perspective, it is not conceivable (Scott, 2014). Given the regulatory barriers, the challenge for the edible insect industry is to gain normative and cognitive legitimacy so that policymakers will enact more encouraging legislation. Rao, Chandy, and Prabhu (2008) ask whether and how organizations obtain legitimacy when their products or services have not yet been approved. The research in Chapter 4 responds to that question. Using the legitimacy strategy framework by Aldrich and Fiol (1994), the findings show that the edible insect sector has been able to gain legitimacy by implementing inter- and intra-organizational legitimacy strategies. Insect breeders are still fragmented in terms of cooperation, but some of the breeders recognize this as an issue and are attempting to improve cooperation through, for instance, the sector's professional association. In order to increase its legitimation further, the sector will need to focus on institutional strategies. For instance, strengthening ties to educational institutions and increasing lobby activities at the EU will be imperative to additional legitimacy gains. The research in Chapter 5 extends the focus on legitimacy strategies aimed at gaining attention to the sector at the policy level.

Identifying Gaps in the Dutch Edible Insect Sector's Legitimacy Strategies

The research in Chapter 5 drew on the legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) and institutional entrepreneurship literatures (Battilana et al., 2009; David et al., 2013) to analyze the gaps in the Dutch edible insect sector's legitimacy strategies at the policy level. Whereas Suchman (1995) identifies strategies that institutional entrepreneurs might take to improve their normative and cognitive legitimacy, his suggestions are broad, and he cites a lack of empirical work in the field on which to base recommendations. David et al. (2013) provide more explicit direction with regard to legitimacy-enhancing activities for institutional entrepreneurs, yet they offer only a list rather than a clear framework to use for analysis. The Shiffman and Smith (2007) policy framework complements the typologies put forth by Suchman (1995) and David et al. (2013). By synthesizing all three works, the research in this study is able to identify the gaps in the Dutch edible insect sector's legitimacy strategies as perceived by actors and experts in the field, and suggests measures that the sector could take to improve its legitimacy and gain more attention from policymakers.

Response to the Research Question

The four studies in this dissertation were guided by, and set out to respond to, the following question:

> *How do institutional and strategic perspectives on organizational legitimacy inform the legitimacy strategies of organizations?*

The studies in Chapters 2 and 3 focus primarily on the perception of a sector through the media and through the academic lens, viewing legitimacy from an institutional perspective rather than a strategic one. For example, the media reflections of changes in cognitive legitimacy of NGOs can be traced to shifts in economic, political, and social institutions. As Suchman indicated (1995), a strict institutionalist view might preclude agency involvement in this process. However, it is argued here that while broader shifts may be bigger than individual sectors, sectors may influence the process if they understand the playing field, anticipate changes, and respond with actions that impact perception such as frames and powerful (counter-) narratives.

The studies in Chapters 4 and 5 offer a more straightforward strategic approach to the legitimation process. The emerging edible insect sector may not be able to control the broader economic and social changes taking place globally, but strategic activities may allow the sector not only to steer through the institutional roadblocks that it is facing, but also to influence the narrative and perception in order to pave the way for its own development and growth in the EU. Given the durability of institutions, this is no easy task. Following the edible insect sector's legitimation process, and

specifically which strategies it does or does not follow to traverse the institutional highways toward its destination of obtaining the license to operate, could inform the strategic choices of future emerging sectors in their journey toward legitimation.

The research in Chapters 2 and 3 was necessary to build an understanding of the importance of existing institutions, categorization, framing, vocabulary, and external actors (such as researchers) to the legitimation process of a field. This knowledge was imperative to the research in Chapters 4 and 5 in order to fully comprehend the strategic opportunities and constraints facing an emerging sector.

Contributions to the Literature

Legitimacy and Media Frames

The research in Chapter 2 has contributed to our understanding of how media frames reflect cognitive legitimacy in general and the taken-for-grantedness of nongovernmental organizations in specific. Previous research has operationalized normative legitimacy through media frames (Deephouse, 1996; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) and studied the effect of media frames on cognitive legitimacy (Humphreys & Latour, 2013). The analysis in Chapter 2 revealed when NGOs attained taken-for-grantedness and traced the development of cognitive legitimacy over time. The study also confirms McKendrick et al.'s (2003) findings that density alone does not legitimate.

Themes and Isomorphism

The study in Chapter 3 contributes to the literature in two ways: first, it employs a method new to the nonprofit and business fields – topic modeling. Topic models such as latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) can be useful for statistical analysis of large corpora (Blei & Lafferty, 2009). In their suggestions for future research in their study on themes, Ryan and Bernard (2003) asked to what extent automated procedures could be developed to discover themes. Chapter 3 responds to their question by demonstrating that topic modeling is an effective tool for theme identification.

The second contribution to the literature from Chapter 3 is the focus on scholars' use of language in research on NPOs and the identification of a trend toward the language of business. This is a first step in investigating how language use in scholarly articles affects NPO field development.

Legitimacy Strategies and Sector Emergence

Advocates of insect consumption for food and feed have been praising the nutritional benefits of insects for decades (e.g., DeFoliart, 1999; Ramos-Elorduy, 2009). However, sector emergence has only begun to take off globally in recent years. This research introduces the edible insect sector to the business management field; up to this

point, research on the sector has primarily taken place within the natural sciences. However, as this study shows, given the potential of the sector to provide social, economic, and innovative solutions to future food production and consumption issues, research on edible insects is also well-placed in the social science and organizational management disciplines.

Previous research on the legitimacy trajectory of emerging organizations has generally assumed regulatory approval (Rao et al., 2008; Van Werven et al., 2015; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). This research analyzes legitimacy strategies, with a specific emphasis on the pursuit of regulative legitimacy.

Institutional Entrepreneurs Gaining Policy Attention

"We need to get in the field to observe what is happening, at the time that it is happening, and ask the actors about their ideas and actions as they are occurring" (Boxenbaum, 2008). The research in Chapter 5 heeds Boxenbaum's advice: it studies an emerging sector's legitimation process in real time. In so doing, the study begins a journey to trace the sector's legitimation process from beginning to end, an end that may result in success or may not.

The institutional entrepreneurship and legitimacy literatures provide theoretical and empirical guidelines for analysis (Battilana et al. 2009; David et al., 2013; Suchman, 1995; Tracey et al., 2011), but few studies have applied these guidelines to legitimacy as it is in-progress. Following the legitimation of the edible insect sector as it is occurring, this study translates the analysis in Suchman (1995) and David et al. (2013) into actionable terms for the edible insect practitioner.

It is too early to tell whether the sector will be successful, but regardless of success or failure, we can learn from the actors, their strategies, and how well they manage to maneuver through the twists and turns of the institutional roadway.

Implications for Practitioners

The main implication of the first study is that there is an evident change in the way that nongovernmental organizations have been framed in the media over time. Awareness of these changes by organizations and their members can inform future legitimacy maintenance strategies. For emerging organizations, recognizing the significance of identity, framing, and perception may impact strategic communication decisions.

With regard to the second study on academic research of nonprofits, practitioners are already aware of the move toward more professionalism, and studies are mixed as to whether that move is positive or negative for employees, constituents, and donors (Maier et al., 2016). Where academia is concerned, the study here implies a trend toward a managerialist approach to research, evidenced by the increased use

of business terminology in scholarly articles on NPOs. For practitioners, this may a positive or negative finding, depending on which side of the professionalism fence they stand. For NPO scholars, awareness of the impact of language and the inherent though perhaps unintended bias involved in the use of specific terminology may inform future research. In any case, the language we use to discuss and describe our research matters; scholars' role in the professionalization debate is therefore a relevant issue in field development.

The practical implications of the third study involve both emerging sector advocates and policymakers. One of the main implications of the research is that perhaps not all legitimacy strategies are created equally. That is to say, the focus on legitimacy strategy may depend on the type of sector as well as on the current political, economic, and/or environmental situation. For example, in the case presented here, the need for emphasis on institutional strategies is in part due to friction created by conflicting food production, food security, and sustainability policies at the EU level. It is vital that sector advocates understand the policy landscape and present solutions that take into account or perhaps even resolve the policy discord.

Finally, the relevance of the fourth study for institutional entrepreneurs and/or new sector advocates is that it identifies the specific gaps in the sector's legitimacy strategies and makes reasonable and do-able suggestions to fill those gaps. For example, there is currently no agreement within the Dutch edible insect sector as to how the sector should be positioned and how that positioning should be communicated, as a sector, to external stakeholders, the public, or policymakers. The findings suggest that not only does the sector need to agree on a specific position and proceed collectively with regard to publicizing this position, but also that the sector should be specifically represented as good for society, as fulfilling a societal need. In general, the outcome of the research might be useful to practitioners by bringing to light institutional elements and strategic issues that they may not have otherwise considered.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The limitations and directions for future research have been outlined in each chapter. However, two additional limitations and directions have been identified and are discussed below.

The research in the dissertation could have followed one industry to gain a complete picture of that industry's legitimacy "profile." However, that would have precluded the opportunity to study an emerging sector's legitimation process as it is occurring. Had the decision been made to focus solely on the edible insect sector, information gleaned from the investigation into an existing sector's taken-for-grantedness would

have been missed. There were thus opportunities and limitations involved in pursuing either option.

With regard to future research, this dissertation has primarily focused on the process of obtaining legitimacy and the road to taken-for-grantedness. To complete the picture, future research might address legitimacy maintenance strategies for existing organizations using frame analysis to plot the legitimacy course for that particular industry in order to inform future decisions, and/or utilize a policy framework tool to identify gaps in the organization's or industry's legitimacy strategies.

Another possible area of future research involves the edible insect sector. The sector offers a plethora of research opportunities in management studies. For example, the subject could be analyzed from leadership, cross-cultural, discourse, social movement, business communication, sustainability, and network perspectives. Considerable studies have been conducted in all of these areas, but issues that are inextricably tied to the edible insect sector such as food culture and identity or dependence on foreign commodities, for example, present challenges and prospects that may lead to new theoretical and empirical insights. One example of future research might be to compare how the edible insect sector is developing in various global regions such as Europe, North America, South America, and Asia, for example. Another very interesting study would be to research the edible insect sector from the public policy discourse perspective introduced by Motion and Leitch (2009) which considers the legitimating function of public policy and its intersection with organizational identity.

Concluding Remarks

The studies in this dissertation discuss institutional pressures and strategic options that impact organizational legitimacy development. Obtaining and maintaining the license to operate can be a long ride, complete with institutional thoroughfares, detours, and roadblocks. The research here attempted to show that the road to legitimacy may have smooth stretches along the way and that organizations may be able to influence some parts of the journey, but the road itself continues as long as the organizations are in existence. Even after having achieved taken-for-grantedness, organizations are not immune to changes in social values and needs, legislation, the environment, and innovation. They may need to adjust to the conditions, or in some cases try to change the environment to adjust to their course. At the beginning of the road, the number of other organizations travelling the same path is important, as is how the organizations are categorized and framed. Thereafter, when the social landscape begins to change, framing and positioning become more important.

If organizations are "recalcitrant tools that exist for the purpose of achieving social values," (Kraatz, Ventresca, & Deng, 2010, p. 1541), then the ultimate goal of this journey is value realization. Navigating the sometimes slippery slope of legitimacy is one of the challenges to organizations as they travel along the institutional highway toward achieving this goal.

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Summary in Dutch

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Deze dissertatie is het verslag van een onderzoek naar de lange en moeizame weg naar legitimiteit van organisaties. Een lange weg, omdat organisaties legitimiteit pas verwerven gedurende hun bestaan, en een moeizame weg omdat het verwerven en behouden van legitimiteit afhankelijk is van menselijke processen, gedrag en percepties die in de loop der tijd veranderen. Het is dan ook een weg vol mogelijkheden, bochten en obstakels. Legitimiteit wordt in brede zin gedefinieerd als de collectieve aanvaarding van autoriteit binnen een maatschappij of sociale groep (Tyler, 2006; Zelditch, 2001) en kan worden gezien als de permissie om te handelen.

De permissie om te handelen is onlosmakelijk verbonden met de toegang tot en het gebruik van resources. Als het handelen en de geleverde producten en diensten van een organisatie aansluiten bij de waarden van de interne en externe stakeholders, krijgt de organisatie meer toegang tot deze resources en nemen haar overlevingskansen toe. Bovendien kan het voortbestaan van een organisatie in gevaar komen, indien het gedrag en de handelingen van de organisatie niet in overeenstemming zijn met de maatschappelijke normen en waarden. Dat betekent dat legitimiteit noodzakelijk en zinvol is voor organisaties. Daarom is het waardevol om te onderzoeken hoe legitimiteit zich ontwikkelt, en te ontdekken hoe organisaties legitimiteit verwerven, en hoe en waarom ze het vast weten te houden of juist kwijtraken. De vier studies in deze dissertatie geven meer inzicht in hoe beginnende organisaties legitimiteit verkrijgen en hoe de betekenis van legitimiteit voor bestaande organisaties gaandeweg kan veranderen. In elke studie wordt antwoord gezocht op een specifieke onderzoeksvraag. Tezamen geeft dit een antwoord op de centrale onderzoeksvraag: *Op welke wijze hebben institutionele en strategische visies op de legitimiteit van organisaties invloed op de legitimiteitsstrategieën van organisaties?*

Om beter te begrijpen wat legitimiteit precies inhoudt en hoe het werkt, gebruiken we de typologieën van Scott (2014) en Suchman (1995). Deze twee wetenschappers onderscheiden drie typen van legitimiteit voor organisaties. Scott beschrijft regulatieve, normatieve en cognitieve legitimiteit. Hij omschrijft regulatieve legitimiteit als het voldoen aan professionele normen en aan de wettelijke regelgeving, normatieve legitimiteit als het juiste doen in termen van maatschappelijke waarden en normen, en cognitieve legitimiteit als het conformeren aan sjablonen of scripts voor gedrag omdat ze algemeen beschouwd worden als de manier waarop dingen horen te gaan. Scott legt uit dat instituties het raamwerk vormen voor stabiliteit en dat regulatieve, normatieve en cognitieve elementen instituties verstevigen. Als deze drie elementen op een goede manier zijn verweven en de stabiliteit en het gedrag ondersteunen, zijn de instituties stabiel en robuust. Bestaat er een spanningsveld tussen de elementen, dan brokkelt het fundament af en kan dat leiden tot een institutionele verandering.

De typologie van Suchman (1995) gaat uit van pragmatische, morele en cognitieve legitimiteit. Suchman geeft aan dat pragmatische legitimiteit verkregen wordt van groepen die de legitimiteit verlenen omdat ze daar zelf voordeel bij hebben. Een organisatie levert een product of een dienst aan een groep en ontvangt in ruil de steun van die groep. Pragmatische legitimiteit komt vaak tot uitdrukking in beleid en prestatienormen. Morele legitimiteit wordt toegekend door het publiek als de organisatie vanuit maatschappelijke normen en waarden als ethisch correct wordt beschouwd. Dat betekent dat de producten, processen en structuren van een organisatie geschikt worden bevonden voor een segment van de maatschappij of voor de maatschappij als geheel.

In tegenstelling tot pragmatische en morele legitimiteit heeft een organisatie volgens Suchman (1995) brede cognitieve legitimiteit verworven als haar aanwezigheid en activiteiten de sociale omgeving minder chaotisch, begrijpelijker en beheersbaarder maken. Een organisatie heeft een vanzelfsprekende ('taken-for-granted') cognitieve legitimiteit bereikt als ze zo zeer maatschappelijk verankerd is dat haar bestaan niet ter discussie staat. Ook Scott (2014) geeft aan dat cognitieve legitimiteit afhankelijk is van vanzelfsprekende overtuigingen en dat individuen en organisaties zich conformeren aan cultureel geaccepteerde rollen en gedrag om dit te bereiken. Conformeren gebeurt heel vaak omdat een ander gedrag ondenkbaar is. Als een organisatie vanzelfsprekend wordt, zal er veel minder kritisch naar haar bestaansrecht worden gekeken. Het is niet verrassend dat cognitieve legitimiteit het meest lastig te realiseren is.

De eerste studie in de dissertatie gaat in op de legitimiteit van een bestaande sector. Met behulp van framingonderzoek wordt het belang van categorisatie en identiteit voor het cognitieve proces geïllustreerd. Aan de hand van artikelen in de periode 1985-2010 uit twee toonaangevende kranten - de *New York Times* en de *Financial Times* - is onderzocht hoe niet-gouvernementele organisaties (NGO's) in de loop der jaren werden geframed. Eerder onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat framing een indicator is van zowel normatieve als cognitieve legitimiteit. Deze studie is gericht op het beantwoorden van de vraag: *In hoeverre wordt het legitimeringsproces van niet-gouvernementele organisaties weerspiegeld in de media?* Het onderzoek wijst uit dat NGO's als sector halverwege de jaren '90 een status van vanzelfsprekend-heid hebben bereikt. Uit het onderzoek blijkt ook dat de framing in de kranten een weerspiegeling is van het legitimeringsproces van de NGO's en van de transitie van de sector - zoals de media die waarnamen - van beschermers naar partners naar beleidsmakers naar hulpverleners.

In de tweede studie is geanalyseerd op welke manier over non-profitorganisaties (NPO's) werd gesproken in wetenschappelijke artikelen tussen 1990 en 2010 en wat de gevolgen daarvan waren voor hun legitimiteit. Er wordt antwoord gezocht op de vraag: *Hoe komt het overnemen van zakelijk taalgebruik tot uitdrukking in de onderwerpen van wetenschappelijk onderzoek naar non-profitorganisaties?* Het onderzoek

bevestigt dat de manier waarop we over organisaties spreken ons beeld van de legitimiteit voor die organisaties kan versterken of bijstellen. Een van de hoofdonderwerpen in deze studie is isomorfie. Isomorfie doet zich voor als organisaties de vorm, werkwijzen en/of procedures van bestaande organisaties overnemen om legitimiteit te verwerven. Met behulp van topic modeling is gezocht naar thema's in het wetenschappelijke discours over non-profitorganisaties. Hieruit blijkt dat er duidelijke veranderingen waarneembaar zijn in de academische onderzoeksagenda over non-profitorganisaties. Topic models worden niet vaak gebruikt in managementonderzoek, maar dit onderzoek heeft aangetoond dat topic models als latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) een effectief middel zijn om grote corpora van verschillende disciplines te analyseren. De studie wijst ook uit dat er een trend bestaat naar het gebruik van zakelijke taal in het onderzoek naar NPO's. Het vormt een eerste stap in het bestuderen hoe taalgebruik in wetenschappelijke artikelen van invloed kan zijn op de ontwikkelingen van NPO's in de praktijk.

De eerste twee onderzoeken hebben betrekking op bestaande organisaties en het analyseren van secundaire data. Ze zijn meer gericht op de legitimiteitsprocessen omdat de parameters meebewegen met veranderingen in maatschappelijke waarden. De derde en vierde studie hadden tot doel het legitimeringsproces in een opkomende sector te bestuderen. De Nederlandse sector van de eetbare insecten bleek daarvoor zeer geschikt. De derde studie analyseert de legitimeringsstrategieën van de sector en brengt de voortgang van dit proces in kaart. Het geeft antwoord op de vraag: *Hoe heeft de Nederlandse eetbare-insectensector legitimiteit kunnen verwerven, terwijl er geen wettelijke erkenning van de producten is?* Om deze vraag te beantwoorden zijn primaire data verzameld in de vorm van interviews met 19 deskundigen op het gebied van insecten en van de insectenbranche in Nederland. Analyses zijn verricht met het raamwerk voor legitimiteitstrategieën van Aldrich en Fiol (1994). De analyses tonen aan dat eetbare-insectensector legitimiteit heeft kunnen verwerven door middel van inter- en intra-organisationele legitimiteitsstrategieën. Op het gebied van samenwerking zijn de Nederlandse insectentelers echter nog sterk gefragmenteerd. Sommige telers zien dit als een mogelijk obstakel voor hun succes en proberen de samenwerking te verbeteren, bijvoorbeeld via de branche-organisatie. Om de legitimiteit verder te vergroten, moet de sector zich richten op institutionele strategieën. Zo zal het verstevigen van de banden met onderwijsinstellingen en het uitbreiden van lobbyactiviteiten bij de EU bijdragen aan meer legitimiteit.

In de vierde studie worden legitimiteitsstrategieën beschouwd vanuit beleidsoogpunt. Waar in het voorgaande onderzoek wordt vastgesteld waar een bepaalde sector staat in het verwervingsproces van legitimiteit en welke legitimeringsstrategieën zijn toegepast om de steun van diverse stakeholders te verkrijgen, is deze studie specifiek gericht op beleidsbeïnvloeding en op het vaststellen van de hiaten die de actoren in de Nederlandse eetbare-insectensector zeggen te ervaren in de aanpak

van de sector om meer aandacht te genereren bij de beleidsmakers. Dit onderzoek probeert antwoord te geven op de vraag: *Welke hiaten worden ervaren in de legitimiteitsstrategieën van de Nederlandse eetbare-insectensector?* In het onderzoek zijn interviews gehouden met experts en is een analyse gemaakt van literatuur over legitimiteit van organisaties en institutioneel ondernemerschap en van het beleidskader op het gebied van het gezondheidsbeleid. Dat heeft geresulteerd in een lijst van maatregelen die de sector zou kunnen nemen om haar legitimiteit te vergroten en meer aandacht te krijgen binnen het beleid. Deze maatregelen bestaan onder andere uit een professionelere coördinatie van de uitdragers van dit beleid, meer maatschappelijk engagement, overeenstemming over hoe problemen en oplossingen worden gepresenteerd, een communicatiestrategie voor de sector op nationaal of Europees niveau en wetenschappelijke onderbouwing van veilige teeltmethoden en toepassing daarvan.

De rode draad door de vier studies in deze dissertatie is de vraag op welke wijze institutionele en strategische visies op de legitimiteit van organisaties bepalend zijn voor de legitimiteitstrategieën van organisaties. De eerste twee studies zijn vooral gericht op de perceptie van een sector door de media en door een academische bril. Legitimiteit wordt daarbij meer vanuit een institutioneel perspectief beschouwd dan vanuit strategisch perspectief. Een voorbeeld: het beeld dat in de media wordt geschetst van veranderingen in de cognitieve legitimiteit van NGO's kan worden teruggeleid op wijzigingen in economische, maatschappelijke en beleidsinstellingen. Zoals Suchman (1995) aangaf, kan een puur institutionele visie 'agency involvement' in dit proces uitsluiten. Hier wordt echter betoogd dat algemene trends weliswaar veel breder kunnen zijn dan de afzonderlijke sectoren, maar dat de sectoren het proces kunnen beïnvloeden als ze het speelveld begrijpen, anticiperen op veranderingen en reageren met acties die invloed hebben op de perceptie, zoals frames en krachtige (tegen)geluiden.

De laatste twee studies bieden een meer doelgerichte strategische benadering van het legitimeringsproces. De sector van de eetbare insecten is nog jong en kan nog geen invloed uitoefenen op de bredere economische en maatschappelijke veranderingen in de wereld. Toch kunnen strategische activiteiten de sector niet alleen helpen om de institutionele hobbels te nemen die ze op haar pad vindt, maar ze hebben ook invloed op de discussie en de beeldvorming, om daarmee de weg te effenen voor haar eigen ontwikkeling en groei binnen de EU. Gezien de weerbarstigheid van de instituties is dit geen gemakkelijke taak. Toekomstige nieuwe sectoren kunnen voor de strategische keuzes in hun eigen legitimeringstraject veel leren van het proces dat de eetbare-insectensector doormaakt. Met name welke strategieën deze sector wel en niet volgt op de institutionele weg naar haar doel, het bereiken van de permissie om te handelen.

Het onderzoek naar NGO's is bedoeld om inzicht te krijgen in het belang van bestaande instituties, categorisering, framing, vocabulaire en externe actoren (zoals onderzoekers) voor het legitimeringsproces van een werkgebied. Deze kennis was essentieel voor het onderzoek naar de eetbare-insectensector, om de strategische kansen en bedreigingen voor een opkomende sector volledig te kunnen begrijpen.

Samen geven de onderzoeken die hier gepresenteerd worden een beeld van de institutionele druk en strategische opties die van invloed zijn op de ontwikkeling van de legitimiteit van organisaties. In dit onderzoek is getracht aan te tonen dat de weg naar legitimiteit soms glad geplaveid is en dat organisaties delen van de route zelf kunnen beïnvloeden, maar dat de weg zelf zo lang is als de organisaties bestaan. Zelfs organisaties die een status van vanzelfsprekendheid hebben bereikt, zijn niet immuun voor veranderingen in maatschappelijke waarden, normen en behoeften, wetgeving, milieu en innovaties. Het kan zijn dat ze zich moeten aanpassen aan deze veranderende omstandigheden of dat ze moeten proberen hun omgeving aan te passen zodat anderen juist hun koers gaan volgen.

Legitimiteit van organisaties is slechts een van de uitdagingen waar organisaties mee te maken krijgen als ze streven naar het creëren van waarde. Het belang hiervan voor het succes en de overlevingskansen van een organisatie moet niet onderschat worden. Het onderzoek in deze dissertatie biedt de lezer nieuw inzicht in de ontwikkeling van NGO's en de insectensector in het algemeen, en hun legitimeringstraject in het bijzonder. Hoewel de weg naar legitimiteit niet gemakkelijk en ook niet volledig voorspelbaar is, kan de beloning groot zijn voor organisaties die anticiperen op mogelijke obstakels, die strategieën ontwikkelen om deze te overwinnen, en niet opgeven.

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